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THE SURGEON'S STORIES.

BY Z. TOPELIUS.

THE
SURGEON'S STORIES.

BY

Z. TOPELIUS,

PROFESSOR OF HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF FINLAND.

A SERIES OF

Swedish Historical Romances,
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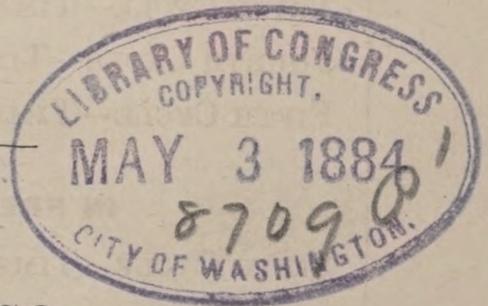
5th cycle

TIMES OF LINNÆUS.

✓ BY
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Z. TOPELIUS.

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TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL SWEDISH.



CHICAGO.
JANSEN, McCLURG, & COMPANY.
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THE SURGEON'S STORIES.

FIFTH CYCLE:

TIMES OF LINNÆUS.

PART I.—THE PRINCESS OF WASA.

PART II.—THE FREETHINKER.

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TIMES OF LINNÆUS.

PART I.—THE PRINCESS OF WASA.

INTERLUDE.

THE new fire was kindled with birch bark, which the children used to gather for sixpence a week, and grandmother, by precedence of age, began the conversation.

“It seems to me,” said she, “as though we were sitting here waiting for a wedding. If I remember rightly, that is what, in the natural course of events, ought now to follow. If not, why should we have been told so much of a long love-story between young Charles Victor Bertelsköld and Esther Larsson, the daughter of the burgher king? I have certainly nothing against the aristocratic young gentleman, though I admit it was unchristian to take the life of a human being, at the Spanish inn, outside Horn’s gate at Stockholm. He seems otherwise to be a sensible young man, who shows his mother a due respect, and it does him honor. But I have a great deal more against the rash young girl, and really cannot understand how Cousin Bäck, who is an intelligent, upright man, can present such an example as Esther Larsson before the young. Is it proper, first, for a young girl to ride runaway horses, in such a way as to break her neck—it was pretty near it—and afterwards run like a young gypsy through Lillkyro forest, in the middle of the

night, with the queen of the mist's garter? 'The queen of the mist!' Yes, thank you—that sounds very poetic, but means nothing but a sloven, flying around the woods with shoes slipshod, and her hair about her ears. We are afterwards told what a fret she is in to see the king, in Stockholm; how she jumps out of a window in the fourth story; goes, uninvited, to a masquerade at the court, and disguises herself as some sort of Flora, or Freya, to be gazed at! I tell you, if Esther Larsson had been my girl, I know what I should have done! Yes indeed! I should have given her a switching, even if she was fourteen years old, and then—well, what was it I wanted to say?"

"Then you would have put her in a cloister, grandmother," suggested Anne Sophie with a smile.

"After she had come to her senses, I should have said to her: 'My dear girl, such and such is the case, and now, since you have so many suitors, it is my wish that you marry a good, sensible man, of the sort that can keep you on a walk, when you undertake to run away to the woods again.' And I should not have advised her that time to say no."

"I am quite of cousin's opinion, that the rod is indispensable to thoughtless youth," gravely remarked the schoolmaster.

"Poor Esther!" sighed Anne Sophie. "Notwithstanding her impetuous disposition, she was a good child; if she has done wrong, she has suffered for it, and I can never believe that, on that account, grandmother would have wished her to marry against her own will."

"That, fortunately, is something which you do not know how to decide, my dear Anne Sophie," responded grandmother. "If an honest fellow will be good enough to take a girl, who, justly or unjustly, has a wide-spread scandal attached to her name, I think the party concerned would better courtesy, and most humbly thank him for the honor. I wonder what will

become of the poor thing after her father has closed his eyes."

"Oh, well," said the Surgeon, "cousin reasons like a sensible person, and thus, too, reasoned the Countess of Falkby, the mother of young Charles Victor Bertelsköld. But if nine wild, thoughtless young girls should have reason to be grateful for advice, and marry a good-for-nothing, if he were only an honest fellow, it might happen that the tenth would give him the mitten; and I cannot deem her worse for it, for such matters depend upon the timber of which a person is built. One is of willow, and allows herself to be woven into a carpet. Another is of birch, and gives her chastiser the rod. A third is of aspen, and when an effort is made to bend her, she is broken. If Esther Larsson was not aspen, she was at least birch, and I fear there would have been 'Greek against Greek.' While the girl still lay in the cradle, her mother died. Her father was at once a despot, and excessively indulgent toward his youngest child, and vain and proud too of the bright young creature. Such principles always pervert training and develop a willful, unruly, impetuous disposition, similar to that of Esther Larsson. But Life then comes, with its cutting rod, and punishes children for the fault of the parents, and the parents through their children. Thus it was with Esther and the burgher king. Such events are of common occurrence, and the wise will take *ad notem*."

Grandmother smiled. "Pardon me," said she, "but when I hear old bachelors talk about the training of children, I always think of Captain Nyström, who built a bake-house, and must needs tackle it to the frigate. There may be some truth in what cousin says, but, as Life is a stern tutor, it is best not to give up the ship, but keep to it as long as possible. I think, therefore, that Esther Larsson ought not to get an easy-going husband, with romantic notions and love-

making propensities, such as the young count seems to be. *Apropos* of the count, what was the fate of the old president, Torsten Bertelsköld, poor fellow? Did he really become crazy?"

"First blind, and then insane, grandmother. How terrible!" sighed Anne Sophie.

"I remember now. And, if I mistake not, the king's ring was there again in the game?"

"It was so that the president was going to be king of Sweden," eagerly interposed Jonathan; "but then he had sworn to get a pension for an old soldier's widow, and when he denied that he had done so, he lost the ring, and then he got blind, and then crazy."

"Only hear," said grandmother to the Surgeon, "only hear what the little kettle's ears have caught! I cannot approve of cousin's making young people believe superstition. One ought to teach them faith in God, and not in old bits of copper."

"And then they ought to be taught grammar," said the schoolmaster, "and not led astray with dog-Latin like '*Rex Regi Rebellis.*' The deviltry of the ring was the result of that crime against grammar. Yes, pardon me, brother has been a student and heard Porthan, but Porthan himself once said '*hominorum,*' and therefore brother cannot deny that it ought to be *regem*, and not in the dative."

Captain Svanholm, who had hitherto been absorbed in contemplation of the silver knob on his cane, at the words distorted his red mustache to a magnificent smile, and could not resist the old temptation to break in with his light cavalry. "Once," said he, "I had a postilion, who was a cursed Turk to drive horses to death, and when I had a mind to instill common sense into the infernal fellow with my cane, he shrieked, 'It is not my fault, captain—the whip was made of buckskin!'"* Yes, yes. And now, Brother

* The Swedish word "bock" is used to express both *buck*, and an error in grammar.

Svenonius claims that there was a buck in the ring. Whether the buck is in the nominative or dative, it may come out at once. I think brother does wrong to blame old acquaintances."

"Nominative and dative!" exclaimed the schoolmaster in his turn, with a smile of immense superiority. "Brother's postilion, that time, upset on the level highway. One may have taken to his heels at Karstula, and still not out-run a second class-man in Latin."

"Shades of heroes!" began the postmaster, who still continued to flush red as a peony every time Karstula was mentioned; but he was interrupted by the Surgeon.

"I thought," said he, "that I had already sufficiently explained the meaning of the ring, and you may now understand it as you please. To me it has always seemed like the evil genius of selfishness, which is just as perpetual as the human race. The greatest danger of the ring lay, not in its arousing an illimitable ambition, and carrying with it an immeasurable fortune, till it ended in a precipitate fall, but in the fact that the king's ring hardened the heart. All who wore that ring became powerful, rich, and what people call fortunate, but only at the cost of other people,—yes, of the fortune of those nearest them. And it was thus that Torsten Bertelsköld had climbed up on trampled peers. While he continually grew richer, his kindred were brought nearer to beggary; and when he wormed his way forward to the height of power, it was by ruining his master, the great Arvid Horn, to whom he was indebted for his brilliant career. But there is a moral law of gravity, by which the higher one ascends the more irresistible is his fall. In that moment when Torsten Bertelsköld had attained the so long and persistently pursued object of his whole life's unyielding ambition; in that moment when Sweden's king and queen, and all the most powerful party-leaders of that period, were thronging around him to beg his favor and

intercession;—yes, when he thought he needed only to stretch forth his hand to attain the very crown,—in that moment he was very surely, without any aid from the ring, near his fall. There is nothing at all supernatural in that. It is a natural consequence—nothing more or less. But it becomes more cognizable, it is more clearly comprehended, by incarnating, as it were, that dark demoniac power, that human selfishness, which continually sets up its Ego in the center of the world, and thence, without compassion, tramples others in the dust. Suppose this power be implied now by the king's ring, and we understand its meaning, and also why it is always lost by perjury. For perjury pulls the feet back from the throne of safety, makes the conscience (the heart's king) rebellious, and incites a man against himself—*Rex Regi Rebellis*. But whether an amulet has or has not a symbolical signification, it always has a great power when it is believed in. Put a spider in a bag, hang the bag around your neck, and believe that it will make you well, and you will get well, no mistake.”

“White calf and red; if he will not live he will soon be dead,” said Anne Sophie, with a nod.

“Just so. I know several who have escaped a visit from the ague by having written on the outside of their doors, ‘N. N. is not at home.’ But to return to Torsten Bertelsköld: it ought not to be forgotten that faith in the king's ring was by this time an inheritance in the fourth generation, and had its root in the superstition of the times. With that fixed faith in his fortune, his innate energy must force its way through all obstacles. In that lay the mystery of the great Napoleon. But, with faith, power also falls, and the ruler of the world is a handful of dust.”

Grandmother shook her gray head. “That,” said she, “seems to me like undertaking to salt Uleå sea with a handful of common salt. But what became of the burgher king? Old Larsson was an unreasonable

father—that I cannot deny—but he was an able man, and amid all temptations remained firm for what he regarded right. I should be sorry if he was obliged to give up, and, on account of that absurd lawsuit, lose all he possessed. What was the real gist of that matter?”

“It was like this,” said the Surgeon. “Lars Larsson had an elder brother, Thomas, who owned Bertila farm, the old estate of the Bertelsköld family, with many other farms in fertile Storkyro. This Thomas had eight sons and three daughters. Seven of the sons fell at the hand of the enemy, and the eighth was carried away captive. Many years passed. Thomas Larsson died, the daughters married, and then Lars Larsson scooped up all that great property for a mere nothing. It afterwards happened, as it often did just after the great war, that Count Charles Victor Bertelsköld’s groom, a man by the name of Istvan, who had had many singular adventures, accompanied his master to Finland, and came to Bertila farm. There the memories of his childhood suddenly awakened, and he recognized the well in the yard, the river bank, and other objects. The political enemies of Larsson got news of this, and persuaded Istvan to claim his hereditary right to the estate of his father, as it was found that he was Thomas Larsson’s sole surviving son, who had been carried away by the enemy. At the same time Lars Larsson lost a whole fleet of grain vessels, which were taken by the Hollanders. All this broke down his business, but not himself. At the close of the previous story, he still stood erect and unbowed, struggling against his misfortune.”

“Well, what took place afterward?”

“Afterward hard times for the country again came on with the miserable war of 1741, the Swedish and Finnish armies capitulated at Helsingfors, and while all Finland was overrun by the enemy, the parties in Sweden continued their irrepressible conflict, till for a

short time they reached hands to each other across the bloody scaffold of Generals Lewenhaupt and Budenbrock."

"Shades of heroes!" ejaculated the postmaster. "It seems that the pedants have come to the regiment."

"Yes, when the great boasters take to their heels before the enemy," said the schoolmaster.

"At the command of the ink-horn!" angrily retorted Captain Svanholm. "Brother ought to tell us something about the battle of Willmanstrand."

"Hear how the ravens caw!" responded the schoolmaster.

"Rather say eagles, Brother Svenonius,—ravens are black with ink!" exclaimed Captain Svanholm.

"I think we have had enough of blood," seriously replied the Surgeon, "and I feel no desire to rummage further in the sweepings of 1741. Moreover, the few grains of gold which lay scattered in the dirt have already been gathered for a crown for the 'Duchess of Finland.'* But it may be well worth while to cast one more glance at the inner side of the time of our great-grandmother's youth—the middle of the eighteenth century, with the whole bubbling cauldron where the ideas of a new period were boiled soft, to be eaten afterward, scalding hot, by the revolution of the year 1789,—the time of Adolf Frederick, Louisa Ulrica, Tessin, and Linnæus, the childhood of Gustaf III, and the period of hoopskirts. Shall we talk about that?"

"Yes, let us," replied all with one voice, except Captain Svanholm, who was silently thinking of wing-shot eagles.

For awhile the Surgeon looked thoughtfully into the blazing fire. "Poorly," said he, "can I engage to depict that glowing forge. Before me lies a city of palaces, but I shall picture only the steps of a royal castle and the entry of a burgher's home. In the period of

* A romance published in 1850.

utility, the burgher king sits on the throne. All his cool calculations cannot quench the life of the heart. At his feet kneels a young woman, fighting her silent battles, and around her now spins the thread of the story. Tell me, Anne Sophie, what shall I call this evening saga of a human heart?"

"If the burgher king's daughter is worthy of her rank," promptly replied Anne Sophie, "then give the story her name."

"What name?"

"The Princess of Wasa."

"Did I not say," responded the Surgeon, with a smile, "that Anne Sophie will never content herself with less than royal dignity!"

CHAPTER I.

THE FLOWERS OF HAMMARBY.

IN the middle of the last century, there lay, a mile from Upsala, in the parish of Denmark, if I mistake not, a farm by the name of Hammarby, the fame of which has come down even to our day. In itself the place possessed nothing remarkable, being neither uglier nor prettier than many another small estate in Upland, and like others had sunshine, verdure and water, somewhat more fertile soil, perhaps, than they, but nothing else unusual, it would be supposed. The low one-story dwelling-house was of wood, and resembled an unpretentious parsonage, and the rest of the buildings were of the same ordinary style; but a sunshine of thrift and comfort lay upon it, even beneath a cloudy sky, and everything was extremely well-cared for, from the painted fence around the garden, to the

little pigeon house, whose feathered inhabitants were at home everywhere on the premises. Nor were these pigeons the only winged occupants of Hammarby. Often they squabbled for grain with a flock of rare foreign guinea-hens, which tip-toed about the yard, in company with geese, turkeys, wild and tame ducks, a pair of long-legged cranes, and an aristocratic Brazilian parrot, which sometimes condescended, from the open cage in the porch, to make a clumsy promenade along the juniper-strown steps. A half-grown fox, with a brass chain around its neck, gave furtive and wistful glances from its solitary kennel, at the fluttering, cackling company. A pair of leverets and a few conies peeped out through the iron-lattice of a little field enclosed for them. In the farm-yard, among the rest of the cattle which had been brought home from the pasture, glimpses were seen of the horns of a tame reindeer, near a pair of fine roe-bucks, and other four-footed guests from more southern lands. All these animals had a contented and thrifty appearance; only a bear and a glutton, shut up in their cages in a remote corner of the grounds, now and then made known, with a growl, their dissatisfaction at not being allowed to honor with their presence the merry conclave of the rest of the company.

Had we ventured to cast a glance into the interior of the dwelling, we should have been sure to find there a thousand rare things, which would have attracted more attention than the menagerie in the yard. But the garden gate, though for the time being closed for fear of unbidden guests from the yard, stood there very invitingly; and who, at that time, could speak of Hammarby without first of all remembering its garden, which indisputably occupied the first space among all the curiosities of the place? It was not large, and many young plantings of oak, linden, beech, maple, and a multitude of exotic trees, gave evidence that the establishment was not many years old.

Nevertheless there were many and rare things to be seen in that little garden of Hammarby.

A couple of charming green-houses, to begin with, extremely well-tended, and filled with rare, magnificent plants from all parts of the world. Next, hotbeds, with half-open windows, and calculated purposely to absorb as much warmth as the cool summer air of the north had power to bestow. Not far distant lay a little fish-pond, with running water, full of sportive inhabitants. Then came long lines of hedges of different plants, among which at least twenty kinds of roses, of all colors, were to be seen. Farther on among these hedges, flowers of all conceivable kinds, and from every frigid and temperate zone, now flaunted with the pomp of the Hollandish tulip, and now shyly exhaled the perfume of northern bowers,—such innumerable, motley, lovely flowers, so carefully arranged, so faithfully tended, that they seemed to breathe, live and thrive, in the atmosphere of love, which everywhere floated around them. “Here,” might the wanderer say to himself, “here has a good fairy gone forth with her watering-pot, to slake the thirst of her darlings; here has the sun of heaven lavished his most delightful warmth, the dew of evening her most refreshing coolness. Yet not those alone, for more than fairies, more than sun or dew, the peculiar fragrance-breathing genius of the blossom world has here gone forth and commanded his beautiful creation to rejoice in the short spring-time of earth, and the flowers have understood him,—they have stretched their slender stalks out of the mould to listen to his voice, and delight his eye with their richest coloring.”

If that genius is still a secret, so let him remain. Think only that the king of the flowers has left his grand duchy dominion in the botanical garden of Upsala, and moved to this little dependency, this, his peculiar and best beloved barony, where, free from cares and anxieties, and surrounded by his most beautiful

and beloved subjects, he was each year permitted to spend a few short, happy months. Let us, instead, cast a glance at two young persons, who are busily working in the garden, chatting and laughing with all the relish of their age, not loudly or boisterously, but with a gladsomeness which has a touch of the garden's own sweet peace—themselves two beautiful budding blossoms in the garden of humanity.

One of them is a boy, or young man—it is difficult to say which—of seventeen or at most eighteen years, slender and not tall, with light hair, blue eyes, and delicate cheeks, less sunburnt than at his age might have been expected. He is clad in a striped woolen vest, and waistcoat and trousers of gray cotton cloth, which is an unusual luxury at this time when students either went in wadmal or wore black leather breeches. His coat he has hung on the fence, and he is in his shirt-sleeves and bare-headed, but on his feet he wears substantial seamed boots. His whole manner is shy but resolute, and when it comes to thrusting his bare hand into a thorn-bush, and cutting off the dry branches, with the risk of drawing it back bleeding, he does not lack determination. As this was his very work, as he went from hedge to hedge, with his short Finnish *puukko*, whose empty sheath hung from his belt at his side, his hands began to look as though he had been the object of the caresses of at least a dozen kittens.

This awoke both displeasure and pity in his young companion, a handsome, bareheaded, brown-eyed, animated girl of fourteen or fifteen years. She was clad in a homespun blue woolen skirt, coquettishly striped in the woof with red, above which was a boddice of black camlet, displaying a pair of snow-white chemise sleeves, and wore around her neck a red-striped cotton 'kerchief, such as was just then beginning to be imported from Holland.

“Why! How your hands look!” said she, as she left for a moment the narcissus she was watering, and

the jasmine she was carefully freeing from caterpillars, with the tip of a dove's wing. "You ought to have minded me, and put on the leather gloves," she continued. "Uncle does so, and that is why he always has delicate hands."

"My rough hands answer my purpose well enough," merrily replied the boy, as he cut off a whole handful of large twigs, "and it is pleasant to shed a little drop of blood for your sake, Rica! You can pretend I have gone to war for your sake."

"I shall not trouble myself about that," fretted the girl, as she let a stream from the watering-pot fall on the bleeding hand. "I tell you, Eric, you are so obstinate—so cruelly obstinate you are—that uncle ought to put you in a glass case, and label the door '*Herchepæus obstinatus, habitat in Finlandia frequenter.*' I have heard that *Herchepæus*, in your barbaric language, means a headstrong fellow."*

"Well, why not?" said the boy, with a laugh. "I am sure it would do just as well as your *Svinhufvud*† and *Oxehufvud*‡ and *Oxenstjerna*§. But I never knew, Rica, that you, who are so perfect in Latin, had learned Finnish into the bargain."

"Just hear him boast! Because you have been my instructor for three summers, you imagine I shall be able to take a degree in a day or two!"

"Indeed! Very fine! When the archiater has read with you the whole winter, and I repeat your lessons during the summers, you wish to persuade me that it is I who have taught you Pliny by heart! There, there, Miss Rica! you have a good head, to be sure—that runs in the family—but you are not such a glutton that you eat Latin like soup, by the spoonful, with one lesson a day! I wonder if you want me to believe also that it is I who have taught you *Species Plantarum*, and *Corollarium Generum*! Is it I who have

* Literal, bull-headed.

† Ox-head.

‡ Swine-head.

§ Ox-chaufrin.

taught you every plant in the whole garden? And I believe there are nearly a thousand kinds here. And perhaps it was I who put it into your head, a few days ago, to dispute with your great and glorious uncle about the natural families of plants, maintaining that the orchids form a particular order by themselves, and ought not to be mixed with other monogynia? Is it possible you can lay such things to me?"

"It was your plaguing me with your monogynia and monandria, and monogamy and bigamy and polygamy, and the whole system of sexes, which has made uncle immortal, but which only makes me envious. You see I have hit upon noticing, when the seed germinates, if one or two heart-leaves appear, or no heart-leaves at all, and at that even uncle opened his eyes and said, 'That is something to think of, Rica, but as yet we know only seven thousand kinds. We must know from fifty to seventy thousand kinds before we can say anything positive about it.'" And it is all because I cannot tolerate your polygamous flowers. Here, for example, is a *Bellis*. It is not abominable for you to reckon that poor daisy as *Polygamia Superflua*! Fy! I say. What harm has it done you, that you should give it so ugly an order? But you see I have discovered that it grows out of the seed with two heart-leaves—one heart for herself, the other for her friend—for example, the little bee that is just now buzzing in her blossoms, while the Apollo-butterfly in vain makes his gay dashes round about it. That is something pretty and comprehensible, but polygamy is something I never shall get into my head, and if uncle was not even better than he is great, I should really be vexed with his detestable system of sexes."

"But it is founded on natural laws, for all that, and so it must be true."

"The idea of my troubling myself about your natural laws! I have found out something better, and that is the heart-leaves. But have not the rabbits been out

again, and gnawed the bark of the chestnut tree? To eat and destroy is also a natural law! That is a fair specimen of your natural laws! Fy! on such barbarians!—Do you not know, Eric, you too ought to follow natural laws!”

“I almost think so. I begin to be hungry.”

“No, it is a fact in nature that when a wild fruit-tree is transplanted into the garden it becomes ennobled, and bears much more beautiful fruit. And if I take the wild briar from the meadow, and tend it in good soil, it gains a prettier bloom.”

“Of course, I believe that when *you* tend it.”

“So you are to assume a better name. What was your father!”

“Something of a peasant, but more of a sailor. During the great war, he belonged to Löfving’s guerrillas, and did more harm to the enemy than did the Finnish army under Lybecker. But afterwards he got a little farm in Munsala, East Bothnia, and married my mother, who was the daughter of a burgher, and King Frederick and Queen Ulrica Eleonora were present at the wedding. But then my father had a little schooner, too, and made journeys to Stockholm, until he was shipwrecked at Ratan six years ago, and was gone forever.”

“But how did you happen to come to Sweden?”

“My mother was a widow, with many children, and had a married sister here in Sweden. One summer, my aunt came over to East Bothnia to visit her relations, and as she was wealthy, and childless, she took me with her, and paid my expenses at Strengnäs preparatory school.”

“And still the Finnish garb and obstinacy cling to you! But now I am going to tell you something. You are now called Eric Pehrson, like at least a hundred other peasant-boys. But you have studied Latin, you are preparing for the university, and think of entering in the fall, and afterward you may become a

clergyman or a doctor—who knows? So I think, Eric, you ought to do like others, and take a better name—from the Greek or Latin.”

“Do you think so!”

“I certainly do think so. But then, not such a ridiculous name as the students from the Långhundra district, who wished to be grand, and called themselves *Langhundriander*, so that the other students afterwards improved it into *Langhundundriander*. And not like the Wiesel family, either, who were from Almesås, and first called themselves *Almesasius*, but as that was too long, they took the name *Almosius*,* until they were ashamed of such a beggar-name, and called themselves Wiesel,—nothing very ingenious in the end. But you should take such a name as we have done, for instance. Our progenitor was a peasant, by the name of Jöns of Lennegård, and had three branches of descendants, all of whom became learned men, and named themselves after the great linden in Stenbrohult.† One called himself *Tiliander* of *Tilia Europæa*; the second called himself *Lindelius*—which is not a bad name either.”

“Erica Lindelia is the prettiest name I know,” interposed the young man, while at the same time his cheeks were overflowed with a bright crimson, as though, in his haste, he had betrayed his most profound secret.

“Do you think so?” continued the girl, with a light toss of the head, but not at all displeased. “Well, the third called himself *Linnæus*, and that name, I think, has the weight of a dozen others. Is not that the custom in Finland also?”

“That is the custom with us, for all who become clergymen, or otherwise persons of rank,” replied the youth. “I have heard that Pakkanen, which means frost, was the name of a farm, and from that originated the Frosts. The Calamines descended from a fisher-

* *Almosa* = alms,

† Stonebridge coppice.

man, which in Finnish is called *kalamies*. The Por-thans have their name from the city gate of Wiborg; the progenitor of the Cygnæ was named Swan; the Lagus family have translated the name of their ancestor, Hare, to Greek; and a hundred others have, in the same way, made both Latin names, in *us*, and Greek, in *ander*."

"There we have it! Seek you a name, too, which has some reference to yourself. What do you say to *Munsalius*? Or *Munsander*?"

CHAPTER II.

LINNÆUS AND HIS DISCIPLES.

"**M**UNSALIUS! Munsander!" exclaimed the youth. "I respectfully thank you! If you call that 'transplanting' my honest name, let it rather grow wild in the forest."

"I admit," continued the young girl, laughing, as she tied the stalk of a Persian rose more firmly to its support, "I admit there is more *mun** in those names than generous Nature has let fall to your lot. But what do you call Munsala, in your Finnish gibberish?"

"If Munsala is gibberish, it is because the Swedes have distorted it from Munisalo, which means Egg-holm."

"Eggs? Hard-boiled eggs! Then be kind enough, dear Eric, to call yourself *Ovenius* or *Onander*."

"When you become my enemy, I shall call myself *Ovenius*, if it be only to vex you."

* Mun = mouth.

“What a tease you are! Now you have torn your hand again; the thorn has gone in at the base of the middle finger. Hold still!—There!” and, with the dexterity of a surgeon, Erica picked out the deeply embedded briar.

“Tell me,” said she, with a roguish look, “which flower in the garden do you like best?”

Eric Pehrson was not difficult to appease. He felt greatly tempted to answer the question: “Yourself!” but he controlled himself, and replied: “Most of all, I like those for which I have bled.”

“Then I will find a name for you. Let me see: *Rosenius*;—*Malaspina*;—*Spinarosa*;—*Centifolius*;—*Lindros*—how came I think of that?”

“You have my thanks. I shall think of Lindros. It is a pretty name, and then I shall have you into the bargain.”

“Why not, as well, Rosethorn, or Finger-rose? But no; it is to be Latin.—*Roseus*.—*Spinosius*.—But do help me! *Tærneus*.—*Rosenlind*—now I am getting into the mountains again.—*Rosarius*.—If we should resort to Greek,—*Rhodium*—*Rhododactylus*—”

“Hold! Hold! Half that wisdom will suffice! If you are really bent upon christening me, I want a name where I shall have your company. Call me *Rosenlind*.”

“A thought has struck me. Was not your father a sailor?”

“Yes.”

“And you were born and brought up on the sea. Call yourself *Rosmarin*!”

“But that does not come from *rosa*, it comes from *rhos*, dew,* or—cat o’-nine-tails. ‘The cat-o’-nine-tails of the sea! No indeed! In Sweden, dew has two meanings, and as my father was a sailor, it might be supposed that I had tasted his cat-o’-nine-tails.’”

“That is too bad. I like *Rosmarin*.”

*Swedish dagg—also cat-o’-nine-tails.

“And I like everything in *lind*.”

“Seriously, Eric, do you really think of becoming a clergyman?”

“Do you not want me to, Rica?”

“It is certainly a high office; but, you see, almost all students, now-a-days, become clergymen, so that one more or less will make little difference. I have always thought that there were two Bibles in the world. One of them, God has written in the tables of the law, and his holy gospel; the other, in the great book of nature. The first is certainly the greater, since the human race is fallen, and needs a Savior. But the second is also a great work of God. Everything depends on how the two are read. It is said that many clergymen are worldly-minded; but I know a true man of God, whom his parents wished to make a clergyman, and who afterwards went to interpreting the great Bible of nature, with such loving clearness as no one before him had done. Have you observed, Eric, that *he* reads the name of God on every leaf in the book of nature?”

“Do I not have a chance to see and hear it every day? There is no more pious man to be found in the wide world, than your uncle, the great Linnæus.”

“Well, you see! You too ought to become that kind of a priest.”

“Do you think so?” said the youth, with beaming eyes. “Ah no, Rica! that is impossible! such a man as your uncle is not born once in a century.”

“I think so too. But it is a large book he is expounding, and one person cannot have time to accomplish everything. Look at me, for instance. What kind of a person am I?”

“You are your uncle’s niece—that much I know.”

“Not even that, you see, but my mother was uncle’s cousin, and he, in his kindness, has taken me, like an orphan, to himself. But do you understand that I, who am nothing, and hardly that, nevertheless discuss,

sometimes, about the heart-leaves, with him whom the whole world admires ? ”

“ It is true that I cannot comprehend it,” said Eric, with a smile.

“ Well, you see, the very blindest hen can sometimes find a little kernel of corn, and uncle says that the little heart-leaves are such kernels. So I think that even if you never become so great and celebrated as uncle, you too may chance to explain a word, here and there, in the great book, which uncle has not had time to do. You must become doctor of natural sciences, Eric.”

Eric Pehrson was silent for awhile, and then said thoughtfully : “ All my relatives want to see me, some day, in sacerdotal robes. And I had never dreamed of anything else before—”

“ Before you came to Hammarby. Only think ! Just like my uncle, before Doctor Rothman, of Wexio, said to him : ‘ You must be a physician ! ’ that is,—you must study nature ! ”

“ You would be glad, then, if I followed your advice ? ” frankly inquired Eric.

“ Glad ? I should fly about you—Well, that is to say—” added the young girl, with confusion, “ I think that uncle would like it very much ; he considers you one of his best pupils.”

Eric blushed. That was more than he had ever ventured to hope. But still it was not all. He cast down his eyes, even more bashfully than the young girl herself, and sought in vain for a word which might express his thoughts. “ Do you think so, Rica ? ” said he, with all the awkwardness of an enamoured school-boy, who had never read a romance. For that was not yet in fashion with the schoolboys of that time.

If Rica wished to answer, and if so, what she would have said, was never made known, for at that moment she snatched her foot away from a heap of dry twigs by the fence and cried, “ A snake ! A snake ! ”

Eric sprang up. A little copper-colored snake,

scarcely eight inches long, had coiled around the girl's foot, and seemed to be making an attempt to creep in between her stocking and shoe.

To strike it was impossible. Eric did not reflect long, but seized it by the neck and threw it on the gravel walk so quickly that the reptile had not time to bite. He then immediately stepped on the tail of the snake with his thick boot, and was on the point of cutting off its head with the garden hoe.

"Do not harm it on any account!" now cried the girl, recovering from her terror. "What a beautiful viper! Uncle has not so fine a one in his whole collection!"

"That may be," answered Eric, provoked; "but you do not want me to let it loose, here in the garden, so that it will try it over another time!"

"Oh no! Let me take your knife." And in a few moments, Rica had split a stick, into which she so skillfully introduced the neck of the snake, that, with all his wriggings, he was unable to get free.

"Uncle! Uncle! We have caught a viper!" she exclaimed, as she held the snake, by the stick, high in the air.

Along the border of the ditch, in the adjoining meadow, a man of about fifty years was approaching with rapid steps. He wore a green cap on his head, and carried a yellow summer coat hung across his left arm, under which he also bore a rather large portfolio. He opened the gate of the garden, allowed a couple of young strangers, who accompanied him, to pass through, and carefully closed the gate again. He then paused on a little knoll near the house, and seemed, with much animation, to be pointing out something to the strangers.

"Uncle does not hear us," said Erica. "He has now launched again on his favorite topic of the new museum, which he intends to build over there on the knoll, and then he forgets everything else. But wait!

I have something which he cannot resist; you shall see!"

Upon this she sprung to a little bower of mountain-ash trees, in the corner of the garden, and returned with a basket of bright-red strawberries, which she had just gathered—not the watery, inferior kind, but middle-sized, well-ripened berries, of the sweet variety, which grows wild on forest slopes. "You shall see!" she again exclaimed, and, with a bound, was outside the garden gate.

Eric Pehrson, less active than his young companion, slowly drew near, with his snake-imprisoning stick in his hand, and became a witness to the success of the girl in her innocent artifice. Scarcely had Archiater Linnæus, for it was he, caught sight of the strawberries, before he broke off the conversation with a pleasant smile, sat down on a stone, and began, with gusto, to make the most of the contents of the basket. The mystery of those berries, which were his greatest luxury, and of which he every day ate a little basketfull, was only this: that, in the year 1750, he had cured his first sickness with them, and ever since used strawberries as a preservative. It is related that Queen Louisa Ulrica, who had heard of this, immediately gave orders that strawberries should be cultivated in all the conservatories of the royal pleasure castles, in order that the great naturalist should never, even in winter, lack these, his favorite berries.

Erica knew how to buy her uncle's favor. Her strawberries were the first wild ones, fully ripened, of the year's harvest. And, as the archiater had hurried to Hammarby before his friends had yet moved out from town, it was she to whose lot it fell to anticipate all his wishes. Her reward was a loving kiss on the open, sunburnt forehead. The archiater's small but infinitely expressive clear and gentle eyes sparkled with satisfaction.

"See," said he in Latin, to the two strangers, a

Frenchman and a Hollander who had come to Sweden for the sole purpose of becoming acquainted with the celebrated man. "There you see my Hebe of Hammarby, now while my dear old wife is absent in town! She is a regular little witch, I must confess. She knows all my growing plants as well as I do myself, and even presumes to criticize the system. Well, little rogue," continued he, in Latin, to the blushing girl, "have you found some more heart-leaves, to perplex the brain of your old uncle?"

"No," replied the girl, in Swedish, and with embarrassment, "but I have found a snake."

"A snake! Indeed! That is no suitable plaything for children. But let me see. It is probably our common *Coluber Natrrix*, I suppose."

"It is a red viper, uncle, and it was just trying to creep into my shoe, when Eric took it by the neck, and imprisoned it in a split stick."

"Indeed! Let us see. If that is the case, it is the first time I have found such a *malificus* here at Hammarby."

Eric arrived with his captive.

"*Mehercle*," said the archiater, "a young *Coluber—scutis abdominalibus 150, squamis caudalibus 34*. Do you see! scarcely larger than a pencil, and yet the most dangerous animal we have here in Sweden! We shall put that into alcohol, my dear; it is the prettiest specimen I have seen *captus* in Hammarby! How curious!" and again the handsome brown eyes sparkled with the enthusiastic delight of a naturalist.

From the snake, the good-will of the archiater turned to the silent and bashful student. "That young man, gentlemen," said he, again in Latin, to the strangers, "is going to be no fool either. *Ingenium haud vulgare, peritia, ac labore perficiendum*. What have you been doing with your hands, boy? Have you been wrestling with the glutton, or giving the bear a drubbing?"

“Eric has persisted in cutting away the dry branches in the rose-hedge with bare hands,” replied the girl, on his behalf, “and so I have proposed that uncle put him in a jar, with the label, ‘*Herchepæus obstinatus, habitat in Finlandia.*’”

“*Frequenter, frequenter,*” laughed the archiater. “I know several specimens of that kind, from Finland: Kalm, Montin, and others like them,—*herchepæi*, every one of them, but capable boys. Go and wash your hands with sour milk, Eric, and next time put on gloves, or it may be thought that you have had a thrashing here at Hammarby, and that would be a shame for a tall preparatory student.”

Delighted with the compliment he had received from the man who, of all on earth, he revered most highly, and at the same time humiliated by the smile on the lips of the strangers over that jest of which he was the object,—perhaps, too, with an as yet undefined feeling of jealousy over that attention which the Frenchman and Hollander showed Erica Lindelia after they had become aware of her genius in botany and her knowledge of Latin, the young man withdrew.

Archiater Linnæus then conducted his guests into the garden, and took upon himself the dear delight of there showing them all his many rare plants, explaining to them the admirable system by which he had arranged that beautiful living herbarium according to classes and orders. The wakeful June sun was already sinking towards the west, and casting charmed glances over that rich coloring of trees, bushes, blossoms and sward, which, with the paler tints of our northern vegetable kingdom, united the gorgeous coloring of the south. All those sweet flower-children, all those gentle, innocent beings, fostered by light and the breath of spring, seemed to feel the nearness of the flower-king, and sun themselves in the splendor of his loving eyes. Wherever he went, like a monarch in his realm, it seemed as though the oaks and maples greeted him with a soft

rustling, that the chestnuts bowed their crowns and the larch trees their needle-covered branches, that the leaves of the poplars trembled with admiration, the rose-hedges exhaled a doubly delicious fragrance, and all low-growing flowers lifted themselves higher on their stalks, that they might get a better look at him. He himself was moved, by his pious love, even to tears. All these beings, which he had drawn forth from the mold of the earth, seemed to him living, loving, and happy, as he; but also as humbly, as piously adoring, as he himself. In them he saw, not his own beautiful work, but that of the great Master, who, in every fiber, gave evidence of an infinite omnipotence, beauty, love and goodness. "Not I," said he, forgetting the presence of the strangers, who were reverently careful not to disturb his profound meditation, "not I, Lord, but Thou art He who hath created all this vernal beauty around me, allowed me to be gladdened by its coloring, and granted me to lift the veil from its hidden mysteries. Thou, Lord, knowest that I have not done this for *my* honor. To Thy glory has it all been wrought, as Thou hast bidden me work. Gladly let my name perish in the night of oblivion, and let Thy name alone, honored and adored, live among men, and mount from glory to glory, until the end of the world!"

CHAPTER III.

AN EVENING AT HAMMARBY.

AT the time of this story, Archiater Linnæus still bore his citizen name (he was ennobled in 1757), but that name already began to throw into the shade everything Sweden then possessed that was distinguished and

brilliant. Not only from the whole kingdom streamed to him young and old, to hear his lectures and examine his collections, but from other lands, every year, came learned, studious, or curious strangers, to become acquainted with that man who had arranged nature.* The untiring investigator had time for everybody and everything. Envy blamed him unjustly for entertaining a partiality for strangers, but he was doing *les honneurs* for Swedish science. Rather may it be supposed that those visits, when they were prompted by mere curiosity, must often have been annoying to the great man. People who have plenty of time themselves, generally have no compassion for others to whom every minute is precious; and who can estimate what invaluable hours those inconsiderate guests of Linnæus snatched away from his own time and that of posterity! But also to the private life of Linnæus those frequent visits often became troublesome. Good-hearted, kind, and glad of an opportunity to impart his thoughts to those who were attentive, he seldom or never closed his door to them, and was thus, day out and day in, deprived of the few moments at his disposal for his family or for domestic concerns. He was a frugal man in his daily life; but if he was lavish with his collections, he was also a too hospitable host, even with the simple customs of that time, and his private economy might have had a burdensome sense of those many visits. He himself never thought of this; but his wife, the brisk and excellent Sarah Elizabeth Moræa, to whom he relinquished the whole business of the place, with all this found herself not unfrequently, with too many irons in the fire. It is possible the hostess was not always able to meet all indiscreet demands, for some foreigners were shameless enough to circulate

* The botanist Liljeblad received from the learned another testimonial. When Linnæus' pupil, the renowned Daniel Thunberg, afterward criticised Liljeblad's Swedish Flora, he said, perhaps rather too cuttingly: "Deus creavit, Linnæus ordinavit, and Liljeblad perturbavit."—"God created, Linnæus arranged, and Liljeblad disarranged" (the vegetable kingdom.)

rumors of her unkindness, and her domestic tyranny, and that the great Linnæus stood in awe of her slipper. That was the thanks for Sarah Elizabeth Moræa's hospitality, and many cares. But what was that to her? Her admiring husband looked upon her as his second Providence, and she has left behind her an honored memory beside his.

This time, as I have said, Archiater Linnæus had hastened to the country before his family; and when the hostess was absent, the housekeeping went poorly at Hammarby. The house itself was old and dilapidated, for the new Hammarby was built by the owner during the latter part of his life. The larder was not in readiness for strangers, and the household help consisted of two milk-maids and two men servants. But this did not trouble the archiater, in the least. As it was near evening, he invited his French and Hollandish guests to stay to supper.

While this was being prepared, time was not tedious to the guests. There were plenty of rarities and curiosities to admire at Hammarby, beginning with exquisite potted plants from Surinam, and strange parrots from Brazil; and including the dried skin of an East Indian fish, which hung from the ceiling and had the peculiarity of turning, inside the room, according to the wind. But more than by the collections were they charmed by the conversation of the cheerful host. For all his natural curiosities he had not only learned explanations but amusing stories. Linnæus was eloquent, witty, indeed extremely interesting, in matters pertaining to his science. His eyes sparkled, his features became animated; he was, as the saying is, "in his element;" and yet over his whole personality lay something of the innocence, gentleness and peace of his beloved flowers.

The archiater had given orders for supper, but he was not in the habit of troubling himself with any bill of fare. His own evening meal was simple and light,

and the guests would have regarded it as an honor to satisfy themselves with the same. But the one who was not contented with it was Erica Lindelia. This was the first time she had had the important charge during the interregnum, of attending to her uncle's housekeeping; and she resolved to do it worthily, magnificently, pompously!

Young Erica had, unfortunately, studied Latin, Greek and botany, with a success which had left her no time for the domestic sciences. This did not trouble her in the least, and as the art of cooking was in her opinion the easiest matter in the world, she immediately ordered three roasts at once: veal, pork, and chicken.

The two milk-maids, who had not progressed farther in the art, either, than to peas and pork at most, heard the proposal with much surprise, and asked if they should slaughter immediately.

"Slaughter!" repeated Erica, with amazement. "No, let no one presume to do that!"

The maids, however, ventured to ask whence they were then to get the roasts.

"The roasts?" said the *vice* hostess. "There must be some ready in the storehouse."

She now received the information that in the summer people were not in the habit of keeping fresh roasts in the storehouse, and what there was at Hammarby of that sort was still running and flying about alive. Still Erica was not at a loss. She declared that she would be satisfied with perch, flounder, and pike, "fried in butter," she added, with an air of importance.

When it was found, however, that those fishes were still swimming in the sea, she would content herself with stews of spinach and peas, but as these had but just sprung from the seed—she had herself counted the heart-leaves—she was compelled to resort to the supply of eggs in the house, of which there was fortunately an abundance. So she had the large pot placed over the fire, and, for safety's sake, had five dozens of eggs boiled.

But as she had heard her uncle express much dislike for anything only half done, and consequently also for half-cooked food, she was careful to let the eggs boil twenty minutes, so that they might be thoroughly soft. And as an effort at something better than simple new milk, she had the milk boiled, and put into it a mixture of such spices as the archiater liked best, namely, pepper-worth, hops, mustard, and cardamom. Proud of this delicacy, which was fortunately brought on with unspiced butter, bread and cheese, she shyly entered, courtesying to the gentlemen, and announced that supper was ready.

The guests, invited to "every-day fare," took their places, and in were borne two heaping dishes of eggs, the greater share of which were, however, broken in taking them up. They were about to begin, but it was necessary first to ask for bread, salt, knives, forks and spoons, which little incidentals had been forgotten at the spreading of the table.

The guests smiled. The dishes were charged upon, but their contents were not eatable. The eggs might have been taken for a new and hitherto unknown constituent of the mineral kingdom.

"Why, *pullula mea!*" said the archiater, "take away these flint-stones, and bring us something else. These are cock's eggs."

Erica blushed like a peony, but, confident of the more brilliant victory after the first defeat, she whispered: "Uncle shall some *hetvägg*."*

"*Hetvägg* in midsummer?" said the archiater. "Well, then bring the *hetvägg*. We have taken a long walk, and, if need be, can put up with anything—except the eggs."

With secret triumph, Erica brought in her new invention in the culinary art. She now observed that the composition was of a brownish color, ornamented with green, had a singular smell, and tasted considerably burnt.

* A milk-porridge flavored with pungent spices.

“What may that be?” inquired the archiater, who usually ate well, though always moderately.

“That is the *hetvägg*,” innocently replied Erica.

The archiater tasted half a spoonful with disgust. Seldom indeed had he, as a physician, forced so horrible a medicine down the throat of an unfortunate patient.

Good-natured as he was, he was nevertheless rather quick tempered. He shoved the plate away from him, and cried, “Pack yourself off instantly, and bring us something else. Such a decoction is enough to poison an Esquimaux.”

Erica burst into tears. “I have nothing else!” she sobbed. All her illusions in the culinary art were past.

With speculative contemplation, the Hollander looked at his empty plate; but the vivacious Frenchman laughed so heartily, and ventured to put in so merry a plea for the unhappy cook, that the archiater finally joined in the laugh. Besides cheese, some cold roast veal and unspiced milk were fortunately found, which were all that was needed. It was even discovered that Sarah Elizabeth Moræa had put into the lunch from the city a bottle of that rare Hungarian wine which the archiater had lately received as a present from one of his admirers in Vienna, and that discovery transformed the little discord in the house to a perfect harmony. “Do not cry any more, little housewife!” said her uncle, kindly comforting her—he who did not like to see even a worm suffer. “Nothing except time is irreparable. You shall have an opportunity to leave Pliny now for awhile, and take lessons with the pupils of Lucullus.”

But Erica was too deeply mortified to allow herself to be so quickly consoled. She hastened out, that she might still, in secret, pour out bitter tears, and could be calmed only by the resolution she secretly formed that the day should come when uncle should be aston-

ished over her talents in the kitchen no less than in the conservatory.

The good humor was perfectly restored by a glass of excellent Tokay, when a messenger arrived from town, with letters and papers which had just come by post from Upsala.

The archiater opened the package with all the interest and curiosity of a scientist. Politics, quite meager for that matter, he thrust aside, that he might instead glance through the many learned journals, and the no less important letters, from all parts of the world. Now his glance darkened at the intelligence that some young naturalist had fallen a sacrifice to his love of knowledge, in the deserts of Africa or the primeval forests of America; and now it brightened again at the news of some discovery in botany.

“The ingrate!” exclaimed he, upon reading a letter from one of his pupils, “he has gathered so much and does not send me a single herb!”

Immediately afterward, he opened a packet containing rare pressed plants from Canada, sent by Kalm, another of his pupils, with the promise to send living specimens soon. The animated eyes of Linnæus glistened with satisfaction. He forgot everything else, that, in the as yet half-light June evening he might examine, with the microscope, root, stalk and leaf, but especially the flower and fructification.

“What a beautiful creation of the beneficent God!” he exclaimed. “See, here is a dodecandrid! Here an extremely rare monandrid! Here, a polygamia! Here, a new gladiolus! Here an aconitum! And see, here is a new campanula! What a pompous sister to our innocent bluebells!”

And thus he might have continued, nobody knows how long, had not the twilight finally have become too dense, and his guests, for appearance’s sake, seemed about to depart. Unfortunately for them—for they would have liked to stay until morning—no lights of the

corporeal sort, wax or tallow, were to be found in all Hammarby, in this month of June. And yet there were several letters still unopened, among which were two with large showy seals. The curiosity of Linnæus was awakened anew. "Am I not a scientist," said he merrily, "and yet all my wisdom is not sufficient to conjure forth a poor tallow candle! Erica, have a fire lighted! I want to see what these letters contain."

"Eric has something else to offer," timidly objected the girl, with eyes still red, after her doleful defeat.

"Well, let us see what Eric can do for the enlightenment of Hammarby!" replied the archiater.

Eric entered, bringing with him half a dozen of the most beautiful glow-worms, which he had just gathered in the dewy meadow. The archiater was charmed with this conceit; the glow-worms were placed in such a position that their light was concentrated as strongly as possible, and it proved that, assisted by that pale phosphorescent light, a plain hand could be read.

The two large seals were now broken, and the letters found to contain two simultaneous invitations, written in the most flattering language, for the great Linnæus to become an honorary member of the academies of science in St. Petersburg and Florence.

CHAPTER IV.

A LETTER, A NAME, AND A DEVICE.

ONE of the most enduring services of the eighteenth century—far more enduring than its philosophic speculation—is its work for the natural sciences.

Our time, which has yearly, almost daily, seen these sciences make such brilliant progress, and, with such colossal powers, seize upon the very mechanism of every-day life, has long since forgotten that time, when the same sciences, a hundred years ago, were still in the bloom of their youth, and, by those who devoted themselves to them, pursued with the love of youth, while with the ignorant multitude they called forth more surprise than sympathy. Scarcely had Linnæus's great "Systema Naturæ" become known, before his name flew, like a flash, throughout all Europe. All that the science of that time possessed, that was distinguished and brilliant, hastened to offer him its homage, or solicit his co-operation and counsel, with an enthusiasm which now-a-days is lavished only on political celebrities. Literary societies especially scrambled for his name as honorary member, and the academies in Florence and St. Petersburg were neither the first nor the only ones who regarded it as an honor to place themselves in a nearer relation to the northern investigator.

Linnæus himself was not insensible to these demonstrations of honor, and did not conceal his delight at them. He spoke often and willingly on the subject, without vanity, without envy, with childlike candor, usually as one speaks of a third person. The great scientist had, even in work, a child's soul beneath the furrowed brow of the thinker. The flowers which were such profound subjects for his learned investigations, were also dear playthings for his lively imagination. The large seals on the letters of invitation also gladdened and pleased him. Why? Because they were seals upon the success of his system; because they were the royal letters of Science, which attested the truth of his new discoveries.

On the evening we have just described at Hammarby, Linnæus went to rest later than usual, and slept as sweetly as though the culinary art of Erica

Lindelia had never made an attempt to poison his night's rest. A timid and forgotten mignonette alone had the enviable honor of exhaling its delicate perfume around the bed of the flower king.

Scarcely had the morning sun reached the crowns of the lindens, before the archiater was already up and out on his customary walk. His two pupils, and all Hammarby, were also in motion, at four o'clock in the morning. There was so much to see to in the garden, to water in the hot-houses, to put in order, and otherwise keep them busy, with the winged and four-footed inhabitants of the place. Not until six o'clock was a light breakfast eaten. The archiater then gave himself a quarter of an hour's time, to look through yesterday's mail more closely, and lo! between the many packages was then found hidden a little letter, on coarse paper, addressed to the student, Eric Pehrson, Strengnäs, and forwarded, by some acquaintance, to the archiater, Doctor Linnæus, Upsala.

The letter was from Eric's mother, and had been written in Wasa. It contained the immense sum of eight plåts*, with a loving and motherly greeting, and a request that the son should without the least delay start to Stockholm, and sail thence, at the first opportunity, to East Bothnia, as his mother's old uncle, the worthy representative, Lars Larsson, of Wasa, longed to see his relatives, both young and old, gathered around him once more before his death. Father Lars, the letter added, was very anxious that none of them should remain away; he himself sent the traveling-fare; and as he was still, in his old age, a stern man, Eric ought to bear in mind that a poor mother might receive injury from her imperious uncle's displeasure, but good from his favor. For the rest, Eric was to ask his aunt's permission to make the journey, and by no means do anything against her wishes, since she had very kindly taken him as her son,

* A plåt = nearly 4d. Eng.

and had promised, if he behaved well, to make him her heir. The epistle closed by stating that Eric's brothers and sisters, and the rest of the family, were as well as could be expected.

The archiater, who had meantime been absorbed, with new delight, in his Canadian plants, did not observe that his pupil, at the perusal of this letter, became more and more grieved, until a couple of great tears began to roll down Eric's cheeks. But there was one who noticed it very well, and that was Erica Lindelia. She laid her hand on his shoulder, and asked sympathetically if his mamma was sick.

"No," said the boy, "but she wishes me to go away from here immediately, to her uncle, in East Bothnia."

"That will never do. It is utterly impossible!" objected Erica, very decidedly.

"But it concerns mother's own welfare," sighed the boy.

"What of that?" continued Erica angrily. "Should she not first think of your good? All the world envies you your opportunity of being like a child in the house with uncle, and every day seeing such a man, and hearing him talk. Uncle! Do tell him, uncle, that it really must not be!"

"What is it?" inquired the archiater.

"Eric wants to go to Finland. His mother wishes to take him from us, and send him to an old pitch-mop, I don't know where, to teach him withcraft."

The archiater took the letter, and read it through with much attention.

"I am sorry to lose you, my dear Eric," said he, "but a mother's wishes are sacred; you ought to obey her without delay or hesitation."

"And who then is to help me carry water from the well, and write names on the plant-sticks, and trim the hedges, and weed the flower-beds, and feed the glutton, and pick out just the right sized jars for the hot-house, and press my plants hard enough, and glue

them on the paper, and catch the lizards, which I do not dare to touch, and put the frogs in alcohol, and pierce the insects, which I do not want to do either?" burst out the girl, passionate and voluble. "It would be all right to take Tobias, the gardener, who pulled up uncle's rarest young silver poplars last summer, and when I scolded him, replied, 'Why, what a shame it is to let the aspens overrun the whole garden!'"

The archiater smiled. "Charles shall help you, when he comes here, day after to-morrow."

Charles was the archiater's eldest son; at this time of the same age as Eric.

"But who will explain my Pliny? Charles only makes fun of me," mourned Erica.

"Pliny will have to rest on its shelf, till you have learned to boil eggs," replied the uncle;—"and Eric shall have the use of my horse, as far as to Stockholm."

Against this decisive verdict, there was nothing to plead. Dejectedly, Eric and his young friend went to select and pack into his portmanteau the few articles which constituted the outfit of a student at that period. As this was accomplished in less than half an hour, they spent twice that time in exchanging collections of plants. Eric selected the rarest and best he possessed, to give to Erica, while she, on her part, was careful to increase his collection with her choicest flora. The exchange was made with the mutual promise that they should always send each other their botanical treasures, and write to each other, too, as often as possible, while they were apart.

Once more they had wandered together through the hot-houses and garden; they had said farewell to every tree, every bush, every flower, which had shot up under their common care; neither had they forgotten once more to look after the bee-hives, to feed the doves, to pat the reindeer on the neck, to give honey to the bear, and throw a piece of horse-flesh to the

glutton. They had finally sat down on the little seat in the mountain-ash arbor, which was just now perfectly white with fragrant flowers, and Eric had there comforted the weeping girl with the definite promise that he should not become a clergyman, but a naturalist, and, as a beginning, a physician, like his great example. On this promise they had "given thumbs,"* and that was sufficient. They understood each other without a word further; and what good would it have done? The warmest and holiest in a young heart needs no words; it rather avoids them,—it will not, even before the blossoms of the grove, lay aside that sheer, transparent, enchanting veil of its dearest secret.

Eric, by his promise, felt quite valiant of heart, and arose to go. But he grasped the girl's hand first, and said: "I did not get any sleep last night, because all the time I lay thinking of the new name you wished to give me. Munsala, it seems to me, was never made for a person's name; and to call me Loilaxius, after my father's farm, Lohilahti, would, I think, be lax upon lax.† To call me Hortulan, Rosenius, Delphin, or Lilius, would be taking the names of gardens and flowers, it is true, but they have been appropriated already, and you do not want me to call myself Aquilegius, Digitalis, Helianthus, or Verbascus. Neither will I rob my master of a single bit of his great name, and so, Erica, I have been thinking that I should call myself—guess!"

"Herchepæus, of course; that is decided."

"Do not imagine that. I am going to name myself after you."

"After me? 'Erica Vulgaris'! But you must not be any commonplace person, as most people are. You are to become a great and renowned man, Eric!"

* An emphatic way of giving the word of honor, in Sweden.

† Lax is Swedish for salmon.

“I shall try. So I will call myself plainly Ljung.* In that, I shall have the name of a flower, and your name, too.”

“But it is not Latin.”

“That will be my secret. No one will guess that every time I hear my name, I translate it, in thought, to Erica.”

“Ljung Eric Ljung Ericus Ljungius” spelled the girl. “It is not ill-sounding, but there is no great ring in it. Think, Eric : Carolus Linnæus ! That has something of a sound !”

“If merit consists of sound, it would be best to be named Klingeliklangius, or Orin von Dunderblix. I am content with less.”

Erica meditated a moment, and then, with a skip, she cried: “If you catch me, you can keep your name !”

Eric was not slow to follow, but the girl was already far away. Off they went, through all the roundabout paths in the garden, she ahead, he after her, like playful children, like winged swallows, without thought of anything but that moment in which they lived. The hedges were bent aside, plants overleaped; mountain ash, bird-cherry, and apple-trees, touched in the race, shook their white blossoms over them, but the student continued the pursuit. Finally they began to run around a large linden near the garden gate, and there Erica came storming into her uncle's arms, just as he had entered the gate, but at the same moment she was also captured by her pursuer.

“What are you trying to do, children ?” chided the archiater, as his glance rested kindly on the young folks' ruddy cheeks, glowing with exercise.

“Eric wants to catch a great name at full gallop,” laughed the girl.

“And now I have got it,” put in the boy.

The archiater smiled. “One does not run to a great

* Ljung = heather, pronounced Young.

name, over flower-beds, in gardens of roses," said he. "It assuredly costs many slow, difficult steps, over thistles and thorns; but keep on, only keep going, Eric, steadily, honestly, and fearlessly, with God in your heart, with a lofty mark constantly before your eyes, and you will some day succeed *in tangere astra*.* From a short root sometimes grows up a spreading tree. You are now, for the first time, going out into the world on your own responsibility; sometime you will perhaps come back to our flowers at Hammarby, and perhaps not. There is a sea between Sweden and Finland, and if you can make better use of the other shore, I will not dissuade you. In the event that your relatives allow you to study at Åbo, I will give you a letter of recommendation to Count Tessin, the chancellor of Åbo academy, whom you ought to seek out in Stockholm; and if at any future time you need a counselor, come to me. Your horse is ready."

The young man thanked him with emotion, but declared that he would rather go on foot, in order to botanize on the way.

"Do so," said the archiater. "I, too, have done some walking with the knapsack on my back. Here are a few dollars to swell your traveling purse. You may have to wait in Stockholm, for a boat, longer than you think. Here, take my *capsula* to put your herbs in. Let me know if you find anything rare. Furthermore, my dear boy, I have only one piece of advice to give you, and that you will read above my door."

At these words, Linnæus accompanied his pupil to the steps of the house, and pointed to the well-known beautiful inscription above the door:

"INNOCUE VIVITO. NUMEN ADEST."

"Yes," he continued, translating the beautiful device, "let that be all the wisdom of your life, as it has been of mine:

"*Live blameless! God is near thee.*"

*Touching the stars—attaining immortality.

A few minutes later, Eric Pehrson, or Eric Ljung, as he now called himself, was on the road to Stockholm, afoot, with the portmanteau on his back.

CHAPTER V.

THE BUTTERFLY HUNTER.

“**I** TELL you, Bjelke, that would be a fine idea. The seventh of July is Frederick’s birthday. The queen and the steward’s wife are going to walk in the park, and Aberg, the *valet*, will draw Frederick in the basket carriage. Then Charles will costume himself like a forest fairy, jump out from behind the hedge and carry off the prince. A great scene, somebody faints, but it is not very dangerous. I am hidden behind an oak, and costumed as—what ought I to be, Bjelke? A genius, a dryad, or perhaps a chevalier, *sans peur et sans reproche*? Oh! I know—I will represent a prince of the Azore Islands—bow and arrows—spear and shield—I will have to borrow a green tunic of Düben—sandals we will cut out of the late king’s hunting gloves, which are lying around in the garret—and then I ought to have a cap of green velvet, with a splendid butterfly fastened above the forehead. The prettiest *papillons* in the queen’s cabinet are from the Azore Islands.”

These words were uttered with animated gestures, by a handsome boy of six years, with large, expressive eyes, and delicate, intelligent features, who was clad in a close-fitting body-coat of blue cloth, with waistcoat

and breeches of yellow silk, and silk stockings and shoes, whilst he was walking with a gentleman of the court, in the park of Ulrichsdal.

“But what will her majesty say about it?” inquired his companion.

“You shall hear, Bjelke. It is not the queen who is going to faint, it is Frederick’s *bonne*. Do you believe she will faint, Bjelke?”

“I should not think so.”

“But *I* think so. *Enfin*, she falls in a swoon, and the queen cries: ‘*Au secours! aux armes! my child!*’ or whatever, in the hurry, may be convenient for her majesty to say, with dishevelled hair and big gestures, this way, as Mademoiselle Duroche does, in ‘*Zenaide*.’ And now I spring out from behind the oak—but do you believe, Bjelke, that Aberg can get ahead of me?”

“Why, he may faint too, in case that must needs come in the play.”

“No, he ought only to evince a mute despair—this way. Now you shall hear, Bjelke. I shall spring out from behind the oak,—I shall dash after the forest-fairy,—I shall snatch his booty from him—it will look like a real combat...”

“But not with the spear, I suppose?”

“Only with the shaft; but to win a victory without a battle would be no honor for me. I shall snatch Frederick out of the claws of the robber—he will scream like mad, that is natural—the queen will rush toward me like a fury—no, like a Madonna—I will lay the rescued victim down at her feet—will bend one knee, as Monsieur Lafleur does in the comedy, and will exclaim:

‘Lady, to virtue’s aid, by hostile arrows bleeding,
From Heaven, on butterfly wing, a courier is speeding.’

You see, Bjelke, that is why I must fasten a butterfly in my cap.”

“*Altesse* has forgotten a seventh person in the piece—Count Tessin.”

Prince Gustaf fastened his large eyes upon the speaker, as though he wished to find out whether that was jest or earnest. The reader has already guessed that the boy was Prince Gustaf, afterward Gustaf III, accompanied by his under-tutor, Count Nils Bjelke, on the usual morning walk in the park of Ulrichsdal. The first tutor at that time was still Councilor Count Charles Gustaf Tessin.

“If the queen applauds, Count Tessin ought to cry ‘*da capo*,’” responded the prince, with a little haughty toss of the handsome head. “Besides, he is the first one who taught me to play comedy. Perhaps he will still tell me stories all the long, long mornings, about the ‘country rat and the city rat.’ It was horribly moral, you know, Bjelke; *on s’endorme*. But then, when the country rat got into the court ladies’ chamber, and ate up their bonbons and marmelades, bless me! how I could laugh at that, when I was little!”

“*Altesse* is not little any more; you ought to think of more serious things.”

“Just that, you see, Bjelke, and so I have a *rôle* for Count Tessin, if he will be one of the actors in my piece. Do you not guess it already, Bjelke?”

“He is to be the one that deals out the reward of virtue.”

“No, pardon, he is to be a hat-maker, who is ordered to make hats for the park of Ulrichsdal, but falls into admiration over the fact that the good God has given crowns to the oaks. Do you understand, Bjelke? He is to be King Midas, with an immense *chapeau-bas* over—over the wig.”

“*Altesse* ought not speak so lightly about a distinguished person. One ought to show respect for his tutor, even when he is absent.”

The prince was silent. If he did not love his first tutor, he nevertheless feared him, and had enough discretion not to persist in a jest which might perhaps have been capable of a double meaning. Half-danc-

ing, he continued his walk, and amused himself with striking off the tops of some yarrow and aconite, which grew on the greensward.

Count Bjelke proposed botanizing, an amusement which now, through Linnæus, had come much into vogue. Prince Gustaf already knew a great number of herbs, and those he did not know, he might pick, and examine at home.

The proposal pleased the vivacious boy, but only for awhile. When he had pulled up a number of plants which he did not know, he began to throw away those which did not have pretty flowers, and declared that Linnæus himself had not explained all the weeds. Then a beautiful butterfly, a *Machaon*, flew up from behind the acacia-hedge, and the prince happened to remember that he needed such a one for his costume from the Azore Islands. In an instant he was on full bound, hat in hand, to catch his booty.

But the butterfly was too quick for him. It flew farther and farther into the park, and the prince pursued it. He thus at last came to the limit of the park, and was just in his greatest excitement in finally catching the fugitive, when he stumbled over an object which lay concealed in the high grass, fell full-length on the ground, and scratched a good-sized slit in his cheek against the stub of a tree.

Enraged, he arose, saw in the grass a person whom he took for one of the gardener's servants, and, in the first heat of his anger, instantly lashed him around the ears with his riding-whip. The supposed servant of the gardener, a plainly clad youth of seventeen or eighteen years, arose, with more admiration than surprise, and contented himself at first in parrying the blows with his arms; but when the riding-whip continued to whistle around his ears, he lost patience, wrenched it out of the prince's hand, broke it to pieces, and threw the bits far into the hawthorn hedge, which on this side bounded the park.

All this took place so rapidly, that when Count Bjelke, who had with difficulty followed at the heels of his royal pupil, reached the spot, he found the prince disarmed, red with running and anger, and ready with his own high hand to shake the impudent fellow by the foretop, in order to teach him suitable respect for the royal blood.

There was, however, something at the same time gentle and fearless in the bearing of the young man, which kept the prince back. But his young anger continued to boil, he began to weep with rage, and could only stammer forth: "He—broke—my riding-whip."

Count Bjelke, also in a passion, saw the prince's cheek bleeding, and took it for granted that he had been personally misused. Furious, he seized a dry branch lying near, and stepped threateningly toward the offender.

"Scoundrel! how dare you trespass against his royal highness!" he exclaimed. And without waiting for an answer, he measured a blow, which might have been perceptible enough, if the one for whom it was intended had not avoided the stroke by a sudden shift aside. The delinquent then immediately jumped over the hawthorn hedge, and, for the time being, stood in safety.

"Pardon me, your royal highness," said the strange young man, without taking to flight any further than was barely necessary for the safety of his back; "I did not know that I had come into the royal park."

"What sort of a fellow are you, and what are you doing here?" inquired the count, as with his fine Hollandish handkerchief he wiped the blood from the cheek of the prince.

"I am a student of Strengnäs, and my name is Eric Ljung," frankly replied the young man. "I came out to botanize here in the neighborhood, and did not know that meantime I had come into the park. While

I was sitting down to examine a rare *convolvulus sepium*, his royal highness came running, and happened to stumble over me, and as I am too old to be whipped, I then—”

“You then presumed to strike back, you traitor!” burst out the count, exasperated anew.

“Heaven preserve me!” replied Eric, honestly, “I did not know that it was the prince, but I should never strike a child.”

“Am I a child, any more than you!” put in the prince, deeply wounded in his manly ambition.

“You liar—you arrant knave! Confess that you are instigated by some arch traitor!” ejaculated the count anew, for at that time the court had many secret enemies.

“Before I learned anything else,” replied Eric, without wincing, “I learned from my mother to speak the truth before God and men; and as I am sure his royal highness has learned the same, he will testify that I have spoken truly.”

“Yes,” said Prince Gustaf, struggling with his indignation in a way which did honor to his heart. “It is true that he did not strike—I fell against the stub. But he broke my whip.”

“I did not do it until after I had received some sound blows,” responded Eric, pointing to his left cheek, which bore a red stripe from the royal chastisement.

This flattered the prince. He had given such a tall boy a whipping, and it was probably his first exploit. He was not slow to recover from his anger, and immediately felt in a more placable mood. “I can get me another whip,” said he.

“Come, *altesse*, Count Tessin is expecting us. Meantime, come with me to the palace, sirrah!” added Bjelke, who still had strong suspicions as to the designs of the student.

“Is Count Tessin at Ulrichsdal?” inquired Eric.

“Yes,” replied Bjelke, looking searchingly at him.

With a new hope, Eric was back over the hedge. "If your grace will allow, I will beg an opportunity to meet his excellence. I have a letter to him, and have looked for him in Stockholm a long time in vain."

Assured of Count Tessin's protection, Eric had now no hesitation about following them to the palace. He had no idea that this commission of his to the powerful leader of the Hat party and the hated tutor of the court at that time, by no means contributed to elevate his actions in the regard of the two powerful personages whom he had just now offended. Count Bjelke walked grimly before him, and Prince Gustaf was reluctantly preparing himself for a moral lecture from his feared mentor.

CHAPTER VI.

ERIC LJUNG OBTAINS AN INTRODUCTION AT COURT.

AT the time of this story, a young royal pair, and with them a new dynasty, had ascended the throne of Sweden. Decrepit, feeble in body and mind, the gallant old King Frederick, in the year 1751, had relinquished the world and the turbulence of the Diet, with which, toward the last, he had concerned himself as little as possible. His successor, Adolf Frederick, of the house of Holstein-Gottorp, who was chosen in 1743, received in inheritance, together with the kingdom, a highly illustrious and imperious council, omnipotent estates, and all the now full-grown party-turmoil, with the Hats, and Count Tessin at the head.

As crown-prince, Adolf Frederick had consoled himself, in his domestic circle, with his intelligent con-

sort, Louisa Ulrica, Princess of Prussia, and with making playthings of his three princes, Gustaf, Charles, and Frederick. At that time, the parties had already been careful to let him feel their power; with an effrontery which might have irritated moderation itself, they had crowded themselves to the very cradle of the crown-prince, and, eight days after his birth, had compelled the parents to change his nurse. Adolf Frederick put up with this, but not so his consort. Impetuous, imperious, and reared at an absolute court, she did not conceal the bitterness of her heart, and already gave but too plainly to understand, that if the country had a yielding king it should have all the more firm a queen. And this was not incorrect; Adolf Frederick wore the royal mantle—outwardly, purple and greatness, inwardly, poverty and humiliation—but Louisa Ulrica wore the crown. The king was the weak hand, the queen was the wise head. Unfortunately for her many and enterprising plans, this queen was too rash to choose her proper time, and too candid to be politically prudent. Her whole life, too, was the never-satisfied sigh of a high-striving and unruly spirit after power and glory. Had she been a man, she would have curbed the Swedes, who are ready to bleed to death for great kings, while they prate down small ones. But she was a woman, and the times of Christina were past. The sister of Frederick II could fight, but did not know how to conquer. The eagles had been entangled, and, caught in the snares of the time, and powerless, she had yielded up the future as an inheritance to her growing young.

Thus, in the very beginning of its rule, the young court stood in that wry and hampered position which always accompanies pretension without power and consent without candor. Around it, distrust stood lurking, party-supremacy, jealous of power and intrigue, spinning new snares. It was a pitiable power, but it still glittered on the surface. Never has a sovereign

people more submissively bowed before a paper crown. Never was more ceremony shown to royal dignity, than at this time, when it was being so carefully robbed of all real significance. The beak of the eagle was cut off, and its talons clipped; but care was taken not to pull off its feathers. Something must be left to delight the eye of the multitude. And, to begin with, the modest Adolf Frederick was content. He was glad, nevertheless, to be at least a king—in China.

But we will return to the story.

Maternal nature had endowed Eric Ljung, the student, with very good courage, which probably had its principal foundation in a good conscience. He could not regard it as so particularly dangerous to have broken a boy's riding whip, even if the boy was a prince; and therefore, in the beginning quite unconcerned, accompanied his distinguished companions through the park of Ulrichsdal. But the nearer he approached the palace, the more magnificent and ceremonious it became around him, the more his heart began to palpitate, he knew not why. At last, when he stood before the high façade of the palace, in all its splendor, and followed the prince and his tutor in through the gate of the yard, he felt greatly tempted to turn around and run away. What should he do here—he, who had never even dreamed of a court! But just as the temptation was about to become too strong for him, Count Bjelke looked around, and Eric went in through the gate.

“I would like to see what they mean to do with me,” thought he to himself.

Arrived in the yard, Bjelke said: “You have a letter to Count Tessin?”

“Yes.”

“Give it to me. I will deliver it to the count.”

“I would rather deliver it myself,” said Eric.

“The letter!” repeated Bjelke, in a short, commanding tone.

Eric looked at the high palace-windows, the sentry by the steps, and the many liveried *valets* busy in the large corridor. Nevertheless he replied: "I will not trouble your grace;—I can just as well present the letter myself."

This persistence would probably have been worse for Eric than he could have supposed, if a carriage had not at that moment driven into the yard. As soon as Bjelke recognized the elegant coachman and the magnificent Spanish horses, he instantly hastened up into the palace, with his royal pupil, that the prince might not lower his dignity by receiving a subject on the steps.

Left to himself, Eric stood looking with curiosity at the fine-looking carriage, from which a still finer-looking gentleman alighted. He was a man between fifty and sixty years of age, extremely fashionable and elegant in costume and bearing, and so aristocratic without any stiffness, and so venerable without any pretension to it, that Eric immediately made up his mind, "That cannot be any less personage than the king himself!"

Without observing it, Eric had placed himself by the palace steps, and, cap in hand, stood there, overcome with respect, when the distinguished gentleman passed close by, noticed the young man, who might have seemed to him something uncommon in Ulrichsdal, and kindly asked:

"Do you wish anything, my friend?"

"His friend!" thought Eric, in a bewilderment of conflicting emotions. He commanded himself, however, and replied: "Yes, your majesty, I have a letter to Count Tessin."

The noble gentleman smiled, but did not seem to be at all displeased at the mistake.

"Hand me the letter," said he.

Eric did not want to. The king himself should

not take his letter from him. He begged to be allowed to deliver it in person to Count Tessin.

“I am Count Tessin,” continued the condescending gentleman, with a faint touch of impatience.

And now, at last, was the important letter brought to light. In apology, Eric related that Count Bjelke had just commanded him to deliver up the letter, but he had not thought best to obey.

“Bjelke?” repeated the powerful councilor, with a quick, keen glance at the windows of the palace. And he hastily glanced at the address.

“It is from my dear archiater,” said he. “Wait there till I send for you. Rydin, let the boy in, and give him breakfast.”

Councilor Count Tessin commanded as though he was at home in Ulrichsdal. It is true that he was the first tutor of the crown-prince, and thus, in a manner, belonged to the family; but this palace was nevertheless an asylum, whither the royal pair had withdrawn in order to escape, at least during the most delightful time of the year, the intolerable tutelage of the Imperial Council.

The count went directly to the crown-prince’s room, but did not find him there. The gentleman on duty informed him that his royal highness was in the queen’s apartment.

The count betook himself to her majesty’s room, and sent in his name. No one answered. The court attendants seemed confused. Some accident had occurred.

The count went in. As tutor, it was his duty. He found a family-scene—the queen in tears, assisted by her waiting-women, bathing Prince Gustaf’s bleeding cheek with cold water and *eau de cologne*.

Louisa Ulrica, impetuous without measure, and always ready to lay the blame of Prince Gustaf’s faults upon his tutor, turned to the count, before he had yet had time to ask a question, and exclaimed, in French:

“See there, sir count, the consequences of your training. The crown-prince engages in fights with gamins, and comes home bleeding, with a scratch that will forever disfigure him !”

The count responded with a dignity which became him excellently, but which the queen could not forgive him: “If his royal highness has thus far forgotten himself, then he has also forgotten those admonitions *I* have never wearied of giving him.”

The emphasis on that “*I*” irritated the queen still more. She was upon the point of replying, and, in the presence of the court people, it would infallibly have led to scandal, if the count, to prevent this, had not requested private audience.

The queen perceived that she had gone too far, and consented, after she had given the prince into the care of Countess Wrangle, with the entreaty not to fail, upon any account, to bathe the wound so that there would be no scar.

Meantime, Eric Ljung had been shown to a side staircase in one of the wings of the palace, and no one troubled himself further about him. A vague rumor had circulated among the attendants, that the crown-prince had been assaulted and badly beaten in the park, by some unknown ruffian. All hastened to the large corridor, to hear the remarkable news more particularly, and no one surmised that the innocent author of all that kalabalik was running alone and unhindered up the staircase of the side wing.

Eric found no one whom he could ask where he should go in. He opened door after door, but everything there seemed too elegant for him to venture in, and thus he finally came to a rather disorderly room, where various chips and tools lay strewn around on the floor. Here he felt more at home, and went boldly in.

In this room, just as in all the others, not a living being was to be found, but in the room adjoining,

some kind of a noise was heard, as though of a buzzing wheel. Eric went in.

A kind of doorkeeper, or carpenter, or whatever he might be, was standing there, turning. He wore a blue silk dressing-gown, to be sure, but he had probably got it in the bargain for some work, for it was faded, and much soiled. His wig he had hung on a peg, and over the very handsome chestnut-brown hair he wore an old night-cap, and in front of him a long leather apron, which covered the waistcoat and trousers. For the rest, the man had a kind, good-natured appearance, and above the certainly somewhat aristocratic aquiline nose looked forth a pair of extremely burgher-like eyes, which scarcely gave themselves time to look at the intruder, so occupied was the man with his work, which consisted in turning little boxes.

“Is that you, Feif?” said he, with a German accent, when Eric entered; but without waiting for reply, he added: “Well, come here and tread the wheel. The rascals have all run away, and I have no one to help me.” The sweaty forehead of the turner proved, in fact, that he needed help; and Eric, who had once been something of a master at his father’s lathe, at home in Munsala, was not slow to obey the summons. The wheel buzzed with redoubled speed, and the man in the night-cap seemed to be especially pleased with his new assistant.

CHAPTER VII.

AT THE LATHE AND IN THE PARLOR.

THE man at the lathe had much trouble with a piece of knotty wood, which incessantly broke at the knot-hole. Becoming vexed, he threw it away,

and went to find another, on the shelf, where several kinds of rare foreign wood were ranged in suitable places. Meantime Eric took it upon himself to turn a few revolutions at the rejected piece, and made of it a splendid button, as large as a small tea-saucer.

His unknown friend looked at the button with pleasure, and asked: "Can you turn, too?"

"A little," replied the boy, while he fashioned an elegant mouth-piece.

The man was more and more gratified, and asked: "Can you hold your tongue?"

"Somewhat," replied Eric, "in everything pertaining to royal majesty and the kingdom."

Politics lay in the air, and infected even a student.

"Very well," said the man. "I have an idea. You shall turn for me thirty-two dozens of large buttons, fit for a mandarin. Do you know what a mandarin is?"

"No."

"So much the better. *Aber das Maul halten.* Do you understand that?"

"No."

"You are to keep still about it. *Mausestill.* No one but I and Feif must know about it. It is a secret. You can begin now, immediately."

Eric expressed his willingness to do so, but also intimated that he was hungry, and that he had been invited to breakfast. The man looked like a plain fellow; why should he, a preparatory student, who was soon to enter the university, put himself to any inconvenience for a turner?

"How?" said the man. "Do you not belong to the gardener's people?"

In reply, Eric candidly related how he had come to the palace, and did not conceal the adventure with the prince in the park.

The turner in the blue dressing-gown seemed troubled and anxious at first, but when he heard that

everything had terminated with no worse consequences, he patted the boy kindly on the shoulder, and said, with more dignity than the old night-cap would have led one to expect: "That is good, *sehr gut*. You are an honest soul. But if you wish to appear before the eyes of the queen, I advise you, another time, not to touch the prince's riding-whip."

"Is her majesty so hot-tempered?" inquired Eric.

The blue-coat smiled, shook his head, and, without answering, went to a maple cupboard in the wall, from which he took a loaf of wheat bread, fresh butter, delicate cheese, and Lybian ham, and placed them on the turning bench. There was a glimpse of a couple of bottles of wine, too, in the darkness of the cupboard.

"Here—eat!" said he.

"Thanks for the invitation," replied Eric, and, without ceremony, made the best of the cheer. While he was at this, it occurred to him that he might here find out something about the court where he had so unexpectedly been invited to breakfast.

"You are perhaps the court-turner, sir?" he began, in order to say something agreeable, in return for his entertainment.

"Something in that direction," replied the man, who, with much the manner of a connoisseur, continued to examine his boxes, and sort them according to their more or less perfect workmanship.

"Then you can perhaps tell me, sir, what kind of a fellow the king is?"

"Oh, yes;—what do the people say about him?"

"The people say that he is a dear good man, and a father to his country, if he could only have a chance to govern it himself."

"I think he means well by the country," replied the turner.

"But then they claim that he is 'henpecked,' as the saying is."

A long, searching look was the reply of the other, but he seemed satisfied with that honest face.

Eric did not observe it, but, with his mouth full of wheat-bread, continued :

“ Her majesty is said to be—”

Fortunately he observed something in the countenance of the turner which caused him to alter his course in due time, and he added, “ a real Minerva.”

“ That is a matter which you do not understand, my friend,” said the man in the dressing-gown; “ and I advise you not to bite your tongue off while you are eating your breakfast.”

That sounded plainly like a reprimand. Eric, who had seldom felt in such a talkative mood, drew in his ears, and resolved to leave the queen in her dignity.

“ But what do the people say about the imperial council ?” inquired the man, who seemed to take pleasure in the frankness of the youth.

“ People say that they are high gentlemen,” replied Eric, very diplomatically, as he himself thought.

“ Higher perhaps than the king himself ?” said the turner, with a smile.

Eric nodded. “ Yes, when they stand, and the king sits. God preserve the father of the country !”

“ Amen !” replied the turner.

Eric had now finished his meal, and extended his hand to his host as he was accustomed to do. The man drew a large watch from his vest pocket. “ Ten o'clock already.”

The vest was embroidered, and the watch was of gold.

And now the turner threw off the faded dressing-gown and the long leather apron. Eric opened his eyes. A fine lace neck-cloth, with a frill, cuffs of lace, black silk stockings, and large shoe-buckles of silver, became visible.

Some one entered the outer room. It was one of the gentlemen of the court.

“*Bleib er da! Nicht von der Stelle!*” commanded the turner, as he hurriedly bolted the inner door.

“Reach me the coat!” whispered he, pointing Eric to an alcove.

Eric brought an elegant morning coat of blue velvet, with gold buttons, and helped him on with it.

“My wig!” continued the turner.

Eric took the wig down from the peg in the wall, and helped as well as he knew how, in putting it on. The turner was as though transformed; his bearing was stately, his voice commanding. A noble gentleman stood before the astonished youth.

“Mark now what I tell you,” continued the illustrious turner, in the same whispering tone. “You stay here, till I call for you. Be careful, and do not stir for your life, if you hear any one walking on the stairs; but when everything is still, you can turn at the buttons. Thirty-two dozen. There is the timber. *Maul halten!*”

The door was shut, the footsteps withdrew, and Eric Ljung was soon alone with his wheel, his bits of wood, and his secret of the turner.

Instead of keeping him company, we will remove to the parlor of Queen Louisa Ulrica.

The celebrated and brilliant princess is described by a contemporary in the following manner :

“She was small, well developed, of an extremely light complexion, had large dark-blue eyes, most frequently of a bitter expression, sometimes mild, always expressing the burning and restless emotions of her soul. Later in life she became quarrelsome, and her teeth decayed; but the mouth was handsome, the smile agreeable, the nose small and well-proportioned, and almost always carried high. Too rash to be insincere, she by that means often divulged those plans which she ought to conceal. Magnanimous, munificent, loving pomp, decorous, polite, witty, a friend to her

friends, her company was delightful, her ambition without limit."

To this picture, her son, Gustaf III, in his memoirs, adds the following touches :

"She had a taste for the sciences and arts; and a strong character, a sympathetic heart, and a disposition elevated above all adversities, made her, in her time, the first of her sex. She was a tender wife and mother, and a trusty friend. Too much vivacity, and a little inconsiderateness, are the only faults for which she can be upbraided."

And Count Tessin, in his memoirs, says: "It seems indubitable that, if the queen had been born a subject, she would have been the most decided and inflexible of all republicans; but Heaven permitted her to be born in rank, where one is jealous of one's power."

The queen sat in a little *fauteuil*, with high seat and low back, as though calculated to make her figure seem higher than it really was. Before her stood the most powerful party-champion and elegant courtier of that time, Councilor Count Charles Gustaf Tessin.

Certain of a new attack, he had, like a skillful general, begun the engagement by himself taking the offensive, and, with adroitness, continued the subject already introduced by the queen, the education of the crown prince. He had lamented about those flatterers who sought to deprive him of the confidence of their majesties, and those injudicious leaders who sought to turn away from him the tender heart of the royal pupil. He then said that he had found, with pain, that in this they had succeeded only too well; that the prince had begun to appear more and more inattentive to his instructions and indifferent to his admonitions; that if they thus continued to run counter to his endeavors, a tutor's best designs must fail, and that, if the prince chose amusement unsuitable to his age or surroundings, which did not become his

rank,—in a word, if, as her majesty had been pleased to express herself, he had ‘fought with gamins,’ it must be altogether attributed to those pernicious influences which had crowded themselves between the pupil and the guide appointed by their majesties and the estates of the realm.

The queen had much difficulty in hearing this long speech uninterruptedly to the end. She now hated this man, to whom she had once been so greatly attached, and on whom she had lavished all her confidence: she believed every evil thing conceivable about him, and knew that he, more than any one else, was the *barriere* which shut her out from power; but she also felt for him that fear, mingled with respect, which equality in genius, ability and ambition inspires. Around these two, around this queen and this subject, at that time turned the fate of Sweden. They now stood face to face, as enemies and rivals; should they tear each other in pieces, and thus bring everything into confusion, or should they extend the hand to each other, and jointly rule all parties, which would then be compelled, united, to serve them both? Louisa Ulrica did not herself know; only one thing was clear to her, and that was, that she would rule,—with or without this feared, this hated man. She resolved to be calm, in order to conquer,—if it was possible for her. She might, with equal prospect of success, have commanded the torrent to pause in its course, or the equator to cease to glow.

“I do not doubt,” said she, “that sir count bestows upon his pupil all the time and care which the guardianship of the kingdom and the encouragement of the arts leave at his disposal. I only fear that this republican equality, which it is desired to implant in the prince, will finally lead to its natural goal,—‘*l’égalité des gamins.*’”

“His royal highness is sometime going to govern a free people, not a people of gamins.”

“I know that. Let us not play comedy, sir count. The commonwealth—that is, the government of the council. Liberty—that is, your liberty to command, Messieurs!”

“The council is the agent of the estates, and the estates represent a sovereign people.”

“The people! The estates! *Laissons les phrases et parlons des réalités*. A people is created to obey, sir count, and the estates exist in order to grant money.”

“Allow me to remind your majesty of the never-to-be-forgotten time when I had the favor of accompanying the most brilliant princess in Europe to this remote land. I then said to your majesty, ‘It is a poor country, but proud of its ancient freedom. It shall be the happiness and honor of your majesty to govern that land with your virtues, to ornament it with your example.’”

“*Encore de la rhétorique!* Spare me, sir count, those flowers of eloquence with which you are without doubt to win the prize in the Academy of the Liberal Arts,* but which are wasted on so unlettered a listener as I. Judging by your behavior at the death of the late king, you must think that the virtues need shackles on their feet in order to preserve their modesty.”

“It is true that I ventured to entertain a different opinion from that of his majesty, about the interpretation of our royal assurance. It was not only for the good of the kingdom, but from consideration for his royal majesty’s own tranquillity, as he might have been exposed to dangerous misunderstanding.”

“Oh! the wise lords diplomats, who never lack a fine word to gild a bad deed, how tender they are of our ‘tranquillity’! How careful of our poor consciences, which they take the trouble to guide in the right way! My conscience unfortunately is of copper,

* Instituted by Count Tessin and others, in the year 1735.

and unable to comprehend the great service you have rendered majesty and us. I will make you a proposal, sir count. Throw off the mask,—for you will not succeed in deceiving me with it,—and let us once speak frankly !”

CHAPTER VIII.

STRUGGLES FOR POWER.

“YOUR majesty anticipates my most ardent wish,” replied Count Tessin, with delicacy, “and I esteem myself happy in having an opportunity to present my humble solicitude, as to the training of the crown-prince, to your majesty’s judicious examination. I therefore honestly maintain that if his royal highness has unfortunately acquired any taste for bad manners, the society of the little negro, Badin, is anything but exemplary.”

“I suppose,” impatiently responded the queen, “that I already sufficiently know your opinion as to that. You will educate the man ; I, the king. Very well,—leave to the learned the discussion of ethics, and let us, rather, talk about facts. You are, for the present, the most powerful person in the council; that is to say, in Sweden.”

Tessin wished to reply.

“No,” continued the princess, “do not interrupt me. Mark well, sir count, that I say *for the present*. Other times may come, when you will no longer be the same as now.”

“When my trifling service becomes superfluous, your majesties and the kingdom will easily find a worthier but never a more faithful servant.”

“The king possesses too many proofs of your zeal,

to be able to doubt that. But imagine, for instance, that that envy, and those enemies which always follow high positions of honor, might, to-day or to-morrow, find an occasion to injure you—who knows?—perhaps to ruin you. It might then be not unpleasant to you to see that you had a support in the proximity of a throne which stands elevated above party-changes.”

“I should esteem it as my highest honor and happiness, if I did not find a still more secure support, over which my enemies can avail nothing, and that is, the consciousness of a fulfilled duty.”

“I know, I know; that sentence you once had the goodness to declaim for me :

‘Je ne veux opposer aux me vils ennemis,
Qu’un vertu sans tache et un juste mépris.’*

I assure you, sir count, that that device seems to me somewhat bold. I believe it was Abbé Laroche who once declared that he would *envelope* himself in his *virtue*. Upon which, Princess Conti replied: ‘Be careful, my dear Abbé; with such a thin wardrobe, you might freeze to death!’”

“It is possible, your majesty. And, nevertheless, I will write over my door: ‘*Malgré l’envie et les envieux.*’”

“Well, if your virtue really be as indubitable as a wolfskin robe, the day may come when it will need a lining. I offer you that, sir count.”

“I venture not to understand your majesty’s meaning.”

“A diplomat, with your experience, understands anything. *One* man ought to be *the first* in Sweden, and that man is not you, sir count. Desist from that claim, which might easily make you the last, and I guarantee you always to continue the *second*.”

“Is it possible I need to assure your majesty”

* To my enemies vile, I will nothing oppose,
But a virtue unstained, and contempt for my foes.

“That the king is the first citizen in a free commonwealth, will you say? How often shall I beg you to speak to the point, when you speak to *me*? So, frankly speaking,—will you, after you have conferred a crown of tinsel, a crown without value, use your influence to place that crown on the head of a real king? Will you, after having so long been the chief actor in this edifying pastoral, in which the flock leads the shepherd in rosy ribbons, finally let the curtain fall, and exclaim, ‘*La piece est finie!*’”

“Pardon, your majesty. I fear the piece would then for the first time begin, and the public might then join in the play.”

“Oh! I know the public, it always applauds when the end is good and the lovers get each other. I will repeat another historic expression: ‘There is not room for your grace and our grace under the same roof.’ Will you, sir count, govern with and *under* your king, or will you still further attempt to rule *over* his throne? This question is just as decisive as it is frank. Choose!”

“My answer shall be as frank as your majesty’s question. Above me stands the king, above the king the law. I cannot betray my duty toward either of them. If it is desired to force me to it, well, then I will appeal from the higher tribunal to the highest.”

Louisa Ulrica arose, and fastened upon her adversary an indescribable look from those large Brandenburg eyes, which could be so captivating in their gentleness, but also so petrifying in their wrath. “Have you reflected well, Count Tessin?” she asked.

“Yes, your majesty. I have reflected upon this all my life.”

“You desire it. So let it be. I have deceived myself in you. I believed you to be a man with as much courage as judgment. I now find that you are nothing but a common demagogue. You have permission to leave my room.”

Count Tessin was about to bent the knee, but the queen rung. "Announce," said she to the *valet*, "that I wish the favor of seeing his majesty here."

Scarcely was the door closed, before the count, once more kneeling, sought to appease the wrath of his queen. What was his design? The queen herself, long after this event, related to Prince Gustaf how Count Tessin had been presumptuous enough to entertain an intense passion for her, and had persecuted her with criminal declarations of love. Whether that passion was feigned or real—whether, in that decisive moment, such a feeling escaped him, or whether the queen took for love that which was only the attachment and sorrow of a hitherto favored subject, in the sharp conflict between two duties,—certain it is that Count Tessin resisted all attempts to draw him into the plans of the court, and just as certain is it that when King Adolf Frederick entered the parlor of his consort, he found his first chamberlain and most powerful opponent kneeling at the feet of the queen.

There are moments in the lives of the best and most moderate men when their customary calm deserts them, and they can flash up with a violence which ordinarily is utterly against their nature. King Adolf Frederick could bear being circumscribed as to his royal power, overruled in the council, having his adherents driven away, and being himself made to feel, not only in the government of the kingdom but also in matters pertaining to the court, his dependence, and the superior power of the council and the estates. Without resistance, he had found himself in that oppressed position, and if he uttered a complaint it was only in the most confidential circle of his individual friends. But there was one point where he was easily wounded, extremely violent, and difficult to appease; and that was any encroachment upon his domestic happiness, or any insult ventured to his consort, whom

he loved the more devotedly, in proportion as he also feared her and acknowledged her superiority.

The scene was violent, and ended, as Gustaf III says, "with terrible *eclat*."

"Save me from this man, if your majesty still has one feeling of his royal honor and his manly dignity!" exclaimed the queen, blinded by her hatred and by the criminal meaning she attached to this scene.

The king burst into abusive language, which, fortunately, neither history nor tradition has recorded, and, as commonly happens, he wrought his gentle disposition up to a wrath beyond all bounds. It is related that on this occasion Count Tessin needed all his renowned self-command, not to forget that reverence due from him to his king, and that, in the violent struggle with himself, he broke a chair in the room. The queen was the one who gave the most unrestrained vent to her anger.

"There is no being whom I abhor so deeply as you!" she exclaimed. "Strain every nerve! Set upon your king all those intriguers and mutineers whom you call your 'adherents'! I defy you, I hate you, and my hatred shall pursue you as long as I live! Oh! you insolent offspring of Pomeranian pear-peelers,* with scarcely two branches to your newly sprouted genealogical tree,—you son of an architect, and grandson of a mechanic, who worked for day-wages, and who knew how, by our predecessors, to hew you out a coat of arms,—you venture to lift up your unabashed eyes to the consort of your king, and tell her,—righteous Heaven! why should I soil my lips by repeating the unprecedented insolence of this man!"

Such words from a queen,—who in this moment was only a woman, and a woman full of violent passions,—resulted, however, in the bitterly assaulted subject finding time completely to regain the mastery over himself. Count Tessin once more stood

*Count Tessin's grandfather was an alderman in Stralsund.

erect, although deferential, before his furious queen, and with that inimitable dignity which he had gained during his long experience in many troublous times and at the most cultured court of Europe, replied:

“In the service of your majesties and the kingdom, I have passed through many a bitter hour, many an undeserved pain, but scarcely any bitterer than when I see myself misunderstood and abused by those whom, until my last breath, I shall never cease to revere and obey. Still, may it be pardoned me,—not to elevate my trifling services, but merely to justify myself in the eyes of my king and queen,—to remind your majesties that, if my ancestors were of a lower rank, they nevertheless served their country and the house of their prince, in a manner which gained them an honored memory. It is true that my father was an architect, but an architect who built this royal palace, which excites the admiration of the whole world. As to myself, it was *I* who had the happiness of conducting your majesties to the throne of Sweden. It was *I* who had the honor of binding the union between a noble king and a brilliant queen, of which the kingdom is justly happy and proud. *I* was the first Swede who offered his humble homage to your majesties. *I* was the one who had the inestimable honor of first enjoying the high confidence of your majesties, of arranging their first residence in this country, and of trying to prepare for them here an agreeable home. It was *I* who received the precious trust of guiding their first-born in the way of virtue and truth; and finally, it was *I* who, placed by my duty between my king and my country, sought, according to my best convictions, to reconcile the interests of the two. The rest of my activity I can pass by; let this suffice to attest my zeal, my unbounded devotion. And, while I herewith humbly solicit dismissal from all my offices at the

court, I do so filled with reverence and gratitude toward those whose gracious favor once bestowed on me the felicity of serving them during the happiest moments of my life."

With these words, Count Tessin bowed, no more, no less, than a man in his position ought to, and, with slow steps, withdrew, followed by the wondering and uncertain glances of the royal couple, and of the court, which had gathered in the *salon* outside the apartment.

CHAPTER IX.

THE KING'S PUPIL.

THE disgrace which had come upon so considerable and lately omnipotent a man as Count Tessin, could not long remain a secret. The whole court talked of nothing else. Those who, in the beginning, whispered, were soon vociferous, and those who fancied themselves wise, maintained that they had predicted that it would turn out so, ever since the accession to the throne. Neither had the count himself made any secret of it. Upon his departure from Ulrichsdal, he had taken leave as for a long separation, and dispensed money to the attendants. With so many brilliant qualities, he had not a character firm enough to bear fortune without vanity, or adversity without bitterness, and Queen Louisa Ulrica had mercilessly hit his tenderest point, when she directed against him the well-known expression, "envelope himself in his virtue."

The royal pair themselves very well perceived that they had not without danger thrust from them a man of such great influence. The whole day was employed

in deliberations and measures on account of this event. The parties were negotiated with. They wished to assure themselves of other support. Count Stromberg was selected as acting tutor for the crown prince.

The queen was the soul of all plans, and contrived the countermines that it was desired to lay, from the side of the court. The king, the good Adolf Frederick, was glad to escape all this turmoil, and think of other matters.

Meantime, Eric Ljung, his new pupil in the noble art of turning, had no suspicion of all those events of which he was so innocent an author. The honest boy would have been greatly surprised if any one had said to him: Why should you let the flowers entice you into the park of Ulrichsdal? Why should you study your convolvulus in the grass with such earnestness as to cause the crown prince of Sweden to tumble down, when, with his thoughts on the Azores Islands, he chased the butterfly in the park? Had he not stumbled against you, he would not have scratched his cheek against the stub. Had he not scratched his cheek, the queen would not have thought that he had received a scar for life, and become so beside herself with anger. Had not this event put her into so bad a humor, she would not have insulted Count Tessin. Had Count Tessin not been insulted in the presence of the court, he would not have driven matters to their climax by wishing to justify himself; and had he not in this manner defied the already boiling anger of the queen, the notorious scene would not have happened in the queen's parlor, which was the cause of his disgrace and banishment. Furthermore, if this had not happened, perhaps several now inevitable joltings would not have happened to the kingdom of Sweden,—and therefore, poor, innocent Eric Ljung, it was you, who, while you sat by the turning-lathe, so safe in your ignorance, had on your conscience the tottering crown of a king and the lost quiet of a kingdom.

Students in politics often reason thus. But the threads of events to-day run as fine as the leaves of trees when they burst in the spring, while the sap which impels them rises from the depths of the earth. The breach at the court was a natural necessity; the rule of the one, and the rule of the many, each as one-sided as the other, must threaten each other's life.

Eric Ljung sat all day, concealed and forgotten in the mysterious chamber, where time might have been very long to him, if he had not had his contract of turning thirty-two dozens of buttons. His only variety was listening when steps were heard outside the windows or on the stairs. He then checked the buzzing wheel: he then waited with suppressed breath till the sound of the footsteps once more died away. He had been ordered to do this, but he also had his own good reasons for doing so. Shortly after the departure of the turner, Eric heard two voices, probably of court attendants, talking together close under the window.

"He went this way."

"Yes, he went this way."

"But where did he turn?"

"Let us look in the staircase!"

"Yes, let us look for the villain. Why, how terrible it is! They say he has beaten the prince black and blue!"

"If Count Bjelke had not arrived in the nick of time he would have really beaten him to death. The queen is inconsolable. They say his royal highness has six or seven horrible wounds. Some say it was with a cudgel, and some with a knife."

"I heard that it was with a dagger. Fortunate if it was not poisoned into the bargain! The lord chamberlain himself rushed to town after a physician."

"No, that was not so. Count Tessin has fallen into disgrace; and guess why! They have certain proof that it was he who hired the murderer, and when her

majesty cried : ' Why does the count want to murder my son ? ' they say the count replied : ' What should we do with a crown prince ? To-morrow we intend to depose the king. ' "

" But then, of course, we shall all be discharged. What a terrible state of things ? "

" Who knows ? If we get hold of the murderer our fortune is perhaps made. "

" What punishment is he to have ? "

" First, to be broken on the wheel, and afterwards quartered, at the very least. But come, let us search ! He must be a desperate fellow. Have you pistols with you ? "

" Only a cutlass and a cook's knife. "

" You go ahead ! "

" No, you go ahead, and I will watch here at the staircase. "

" Then we would best call the guard "

And with these words the brave defenders of the public safety withdrew, without finding the booty they sought. But Eric had overheard enough to keep him "*mausestill*," as his unknown friend had so strictly commanded him. Meantime, he had time enough to fatigue his guessing-power with divining all these mysteries. Could it really be that the turner had concealed him in the belief that he was implicated in a conspiracy against the life of the crown prince ? But then, what was he going to do with thirty-two dozen buttons ?

Meantime, Eric let the wheel buzz again; and when all was silent, and he had finished his task, it was already late in the evening. The work gave appetite, but the wall-press was locked, and Eric began to long for freedom.

Night had already set in, when the turner, accompanied by a *valet*, came to set the captive free. The curtains were lowered, candles lighted, the buttons inspected and found satisfactory. A few imperfections

were criticized, however, and the noble turner (for Eric could easily perceive that his patron was no ordinary mouthpiece manufacturer), condescended with his own hand to instruct the pupil how one ought to avoid knot-holes, prevent cracks, and exactly calculate a proper curve.

“You have talent, fine talent, young man,” said the turner. “You may amount to something if you study the art with diligence. ‘*Kunst macht Gunst.*’ But Rome was not built in a day. Look at this box! What *dimension!* What precision in all its parts! And then the lid! See how evenly it shuts; not a hair’s breadth too little or too large! Keep it, my young friend, and let it be to you a useful model, from which you may learn that accuracy which is a proof of true workmanship!”

Eric accepted the royal gift, secretly thinking, indeed, that any peasant-turner in Munsala could make its equal, especially if he had a chance to select all possible kinds of wood. But he was careful not to think aloud. He knew that if half the gift was petty ostentation and self-satisfaction, the other half was real good-will; and he had common-sense enough to thank the giver for it.

“Keep it, keep it,” repeated the turner, flattered by the expression of thanks, which he interpreted as admiration of his skill, “and if, in future, you should wish to request any recompense for your buttons, then show me the box. I think that I shall recognize the work. There are not many in the country who make such as this. Feif!” added he, in German, “give the young man his supper, and take him with you to the destined place. Tell Adlercrantz to make use of the boy at the turning-lathe there. We must appropriate talents wherever we can find them, or else we will not be ready by the great day. *Mausestill*, man! No one must see him. Let it take place quietly. I suppose you have the palace on the raft by this time?”

“Yes, your majesty!”

“Your majesty!”—Eric was overcome with amazement. He had secretly been ruminating as to whether the turner was not something more than court-turner, perhaps even steward to the king, or what a student might call *Custos* of the palace; but now the truth had come out. Eric Ljung found that, in the noble art of turning, he was the pupil of the king himself!

“*Gut*,” said the king. “Let me know, in the morning, how it has succeeded.”

“Come!” said the *valet*, laconically, as he threw a dragoon cloak over the shoulders of the youth, and drew him with him.

“Was that the king himself?” inquired Eric, full of astonishment.

“*Weis nicht!*” was the reply. Feif was an old functionary whom Adolf Frederick had brought with him from Germany, and with that exalted opinion of his office and the narrow audacious persistence which usually distinguish a favorite in his position, feared, flattered and envied by the other attendants in his character of his master’s confidant, he continued to speak his mother tongue.

“Where are we going?” again inquired Eric.

“*Weis nicht.*”

“Will I not have a chance to go back to town?”

“*Weis nicht.*”

“But what can the king want of me?”

“*Maul halten!*” answered the inexorable guide.

Against this argument there was nothing to plead. The two went together to Feif’s room, in another part of the palace, where Eric was told to satisfy his hunger as quickly as possible, and soon afterwards he received orders just as mysteriously to place himself with the *valet* in a chaise, which stood in readiness at the palace gate. Thence in the twilight of the July night, they went to the arsenal, and after Feif had given some orders, they continued on the road to the shore.

When Eric saw a crowd of people busied in unfastening three large timber-rafts, on which in the twilight three elegant houses could be discerned, he began to have singular feelings. In vain did he seek to figure out the meaning of this strange arrangement. That it was some great political conspiracy, and dangerous to the kingdom, he took for granted. But what had he to do there? And what could all this contrivance mean? It could hardly be intended to move Stockholm away on rafts, and set up the residence of the king in another part of the realm!

While he was vainly puzzling his brain with these conjectures, the rafts completed their preparations, and were towed by boats out on the calm bay. Eric, with his guide obtained a place in one of them, and thus the strange flotilla slowly made its way out on the clear night-shadowed waters, which now reflected houses and shores, now brightened into shining stripes of silver, and now glittered under the plash of the oars and the gentle swell against the sides of the raft.

CHAPTER X.

A NEW ADVENTURE, AND AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

AFTER Eric Ljung had for awhile vainly sought to make out the object of his singular journey, and had wearied of watching the shores, as they glided past in the shadows of the night, he formed his resolution, crept into a room of the little palace, and by the even rocking of the raft and the monotonous plashing of the oars, was soon sunk into deep sleep.

But if his night-lodging was not of the ordinary sort, his wakening was destined by fate to be no less singular.

He had slept long and well, when his slumber began to be disquieted by a stinging sensation, now in one ear, now in the other, now in his scalp. He was troubled by a tickling under the nose, he was disturbed by a pulling at his feet, a twitching at his arms, and had an indistinct consciousness of some noise around him. When all this became too troublesome, he sat up, rubbed his eyes, and looked around him with amazement.

He found himself in a large room, with elevated floor, and oddly fitted out with wreathes of flowers on his head, festoons of leaves on his clothes, and branches in his hands. Round about him, seven or eight young girls were dancing, in riotous gayety, pinching his ears, and tickling him with straws under the nose. In a lower part of the room stood a crowd of people, who seemed to be highly amused at his expense. All in this company were shouting, laughing, singing, and applauding each other, at every new trick, of which, involuntarily, the poor student was the object.

This vexed Eric Ljung. He jumped up, pushed the nearest bystanders aside, and ran away, flower-wreathed as he was, pursued by his tormenting spirits.

Fleeing was, however, more easily imagined than done. The place of exit was not so instantly to be found. When Eric finally saw the bright morning sun shining in through a narrow door, he had twenty times rushed toward the walls, and jostled down those who were standing in his way, before he arrived in the open air. But even there he was pursued by the smallest, the most nimble and persevering of the company. It was a young girl, handsome, dark-eyed, slender as the stalk of a rose, graceful as a sylphid, and clothed in a fantastic and to Eric unfamiliar costume. In her

hands she carried a long garland of oak and maple leaves, with which she was trying to catch and entangle him. For this, Eric had no fancy. He continued trying to escape, he knew not where. In the distance he caught a glimpse of a magnificent palace; but it was not Ulrichsdal. A bright jet of water shot up into the air, sparkling in the sunshine. Eric avoided those portions of the park, and fled on the less beaten paths he could discover. But in vain did he seek to escape. His pursuer was continually upon his heels.

He then lost patience, turned around, and in his turn pursued the daring sylphid. This took place so unexpectedly that he had very nearly caught her fluttering sash, when she grasped the pendant branch of a knotty old oak, swung herself upon the branch with the dexterity of a rope-dancer, and thus finding a seat in the tree, mockingly threatened him with a severed branch.

Angry, and as yet not thoroughly awake, Eric sat down at the foot of the tree, and took breath. Scarcely, however, did the sylphid think herself less observed, before, with a jump, she once more stood on the ground, but, having miscalculated, fell into the arms of her pursuer.

Any one who now expected a tender scene deceived himself, for, instead of submitting to her fate, which ought not to have been so insupportable, the sylphid used all the weapons nature and art had given her. She struck, she scratched, she bit, she screamed, she wriggled like an eel, to regain her freedom. But she had irritated her antagonist too long to escape him so easily. His hands closed like a vise around her waist, and, insensible to both teeth and nails, he seemed for a moment to be undecided as to the manner in which she ought to be punished for her impertinence; the more so, as the rest of the crowd of his tormentors were approaching to help the sylphid.

A tall, fine-looking officer was now seen to approach

along one of the walks. As soon as the girl espied him, she called out to him, in a foreign language: "Count Bertelsköld! Count Bertelsköld! Save me from this impudent boy!"

The tall officer, the chief in command at the fortification, quartermaster general and adjutant of the king, paused at that cry, and ordered the unknown young man to let Signora Morelli go immediately.

"Whether she is signora or mamselli," replied Eric, who had misunderstood the name, "she has been chasing me half an hour, and has too sharp teeth to go free without a muzzle."

"In such case, I know only one way to punish a girl," replied the count, as a sad smile for a second animated his serious and thoughtful features. He perhaps remembered how he himself had once punished the audacity of a girl, and to that day his cheek bore the mark of it.

So inexperienced was Eric in those penal laws, that he would probably never have understood the advice given him, if Signora Morelli had not conceived the unfortunate idea of once more trying to bite.

"Just wait!" said Eric, and, however it happened, in the haste he smacked so sound a kiss on the biting mouth, that it re-echoed through the park.

Himself astonished at his incredible boldness, Eric the same instant let the captive go. But he was revenged. The approaching crowd witnessed the girl's defeat, and Signora Morelli, the chief *danseuse* in the ballet-corp of the court, had too many who envied her talents, not to become, in her turn, the object of the the company's laughter.

"Bravo! Bravo!" applauded the spectators.

The insulted beauty cast a threatening look at her victor, and tripped scornfully away on one of the side paths, in order to escape the laughter, and perhaps conceal her tears.

Whether it was the memory of the scenes of his

own youth, or something in the features of the young man, which fixed Count Bertelsköld's attention, suffice it to say, he asked Eric's name.

Eric told it.

"Ljung?" indifferently repeated the count.

"My father's name was Pehrson, but I have taken a special name," said the boy, with embarrassment.

"And what was your mother's name?" again inquired the count.

He had known one Pehrson, but there were so many by that name.

"My mother's name was Marie, and her father was named Larsson," replied Eric.

A singular glance darted from Count Bertelsköld's handsome eyes. He now understood why the features of the unknown boy had in so high a degree awakened his interest. Esther Larsson had always borne a strong family likeness to her cousin Marie.

"Come with me," said he.

Eric accompanied him to the count's room, in a wing of the palace. He there had many questions to answer, and as he had nothing to conceal, he gave a faithful account of all the circumstances of his life, even to his adventure in Ulrichsdal, and his unexpected arrival there. That which most interested his aristocratic listener, however, was that little Eric could tell him something about the Larsson family of Wasa. That the old burgher king had worked himself up to no small remnant of his former wealth; that he had grown aged; that his back had bent under the burden of his eighty-six years; that the business was managed by his eldest son; that the elder daughter, Veronica, had passed away from earth, and that the younger, Esther Larsson, had refused all offers, and remained unmarried, in order to care for her old father; of all this, Count Bertelsköld did not weary to ask and hear. There had been great changes, during the twelve or fourteen years since he stood in near connection with

the Finnish burgher family. Many feelings since then had swept through his heart, some joys perhaps had blossomed, but more sorrows had withered them. The count's hair had begun to turn gray, although he was not yet forty years old. On his handsome, manly countenance, laughter was an unwonted guest, but gravity the more at home. Transiently, indeed, it might give way before the presuming proprieties of the court, but quickly resumed its place in the first solitary moment. This courtier was unlike others in this: he would not allow himself to be bereft of the feelings of his heart and the independence of his character. But as his character, although unrestrainable when occasion required, was gentle even to tenderness, and seldom showed sharp corners toward others, Count Bertelsköld was envied by but few. He had hitherto taken little part in the Hat-party conflicts of that time, and his life had therefore passed on more unobservedly than that of the rest at the court. Appeased by his individual sorrows, Fate seemed to have granted him that happiness which people of his disposition love to find in outer calm; how lastingly, was a question to be answered by life.

Of all this, Eric Ljung understood nothing. If in his youth he had possibly heard the name of the count mentioned, he had long ago forgotten it, and when he left home he was too young to be initiated into the history of his family. It flattered him that the high-born officer, who appeared so gentle and kind-hearted, showed so friendly an interest in himself and his family. He felt drawn to him, with a feeling of attachment and trust, very natural in his own lonely situation, and finally ventured to ask where he now was.

"At Drottningholm," replied the count, as the *naïve* question enticed a ray of sunshine across his lips.

"But," continued Eric, reflecting upon his singular awakening; "how did I get here, and what kind of people live here at Drottningholm?"

“I will tell you,” replied the count, again with a smile. It had been a long time since two smiles in succession had crossed his lips. “The king, in the deepest secrecy, has arranged for a great festival for the queen’s name’s-day, and he has therefore, just as secretly, caused the three new houses to be built, and brought them hither on rafts. The company, who found you sleeping in the new theater, is the ballet and comedians of the court, Frenchmen and Italians, sent here to enact a play on the great day. They are more vivacious, immoderate, frolicsome people than we are accustomed to, they frisk here like calves in a pasture, and it does not surprise me that they chose you as an object for their mirth—especially Signora Morelli, who is the most ungovernable of them all, and used to following all her own caprices. But be careful, Eric! You have gained enemies at court before; you have now gained a new one, who is the more dangerous since she is handsome, in favor, and petted by all. She is a woman, and an Italian; she will never forgive you for causing a laugh at her expense.”

CHAPTER XI.

THE FESTIVAL IN CHINA.

IN Count Bertelsköld, Eric Ljung found a counselor, which his youth and inexperience greatly needed. The wish of the king was a command which Eric would not have ventured to oppose, even if he would have liked. But, to confess the truth, Eric was

not a little flattered by finding himself the object of so high a person's attention, indeed, of having obtained the trust of the king's secrets. He submitted the more willingly to his fate, as he had obtained a promise of accompanying his protector to Finland the next summer. He punctiliously performed the tasks assigned him, and made use of his leisure hours in studying those flowers which his great master, Archiater Linnæus, at the queen's request had ordered from Holland, solely for the garden of Drottningholm. Signora Morelli and her company, Eric avoided as much as possible, and in that he did well, for in her he had a secret enemy;—he did doubly well, for notwithstanding that her demonstrations of tenderness had been both biting and palpable, the kiss of the beautiful *danseuse* still burned like fire on his lips.

The count had cautioned him not to go alone into the remote parts of the park, at least in the evenings. A few times Eric forgot that warning, and observed that suspicious looking men were following his footsteps. He escaped, indeed, by a hasty retreat, but understood that an ambuscade was laid for him, and determined to be on the alert.

The great day, the queen's name's-day, finally arrived.*

Adolf Frederick had done everything to be king, at least at Drottningholm—and in China. The preparations had lasted four years, and three barrels of gold had been bestowed on it. To the left in the park, upon leaving the palace, there had been up to this time a low morass. This had been filled, at great expense, and roads built across it from the park. That toy which to this day is called "China palace," was built on the old arsenal grounds, under the pretence that it

*The Surgeon assumes this to have been Ulrica-day, the 4th of July. Contemporaneous chronicles, on the contrary, transport the festival to Louisa-day, the 25th of August, which ought to be borne in mind, in order to respect the historic date of so important event as the dedication of China. The 4th of July does not correspond with the date of the king's journey to Finland.

was ordered as Åkerö for Count Tessin, and was moved with the buildings belonging to it, in the manner we have seen. The furniture was ordered privately of several artisans, in the names of the people of the court—everything in Chinese style—and also a number of expensive costumes, from the mandarin's down to that of the scullion. Actors and ballet corps were sent out beforehand to rehearse their *rôles* in the new theater, and Pasch, the court-intendant, painted magnificent decorations solely for that occasion. Besides this, thirty-six cadets were drilled to exercise in Chinese, and twelve of the largest were selected to act as stage gentlemen (dummies) at the theater.

Everything was ready. Tailors, cooks, carpenters, machinists, and a hundred others, had not slept for several nights. The royal family had arrived the evening before the name's-day, but the queen surmised nothing, or at least pretended to be blind. It was fortunate for everything which had been saved till the last hour, that her majesty habitually sat up late at night and rose late in the morning.

At the first break of day, the park around China was already swarming with bustling curious people. As a beginning they were to see the cadets drill before the king, and Eric Ljung also found himself among the spectators.

The poor boys had been awakened at two o'clock in the morning, and now stood in parade, fitted out in tall grenadier-caps, with silver plates bearing the king's monogram. To increase the pomp, two fine cannons were wheeled out. At five o'clock his majesty came and had the boys exercise. This passed off magnificently, and the king was pleased and happy, and very gracious to all.

A long pause then ensued, during which the cadets stood immovable, and nibbled wheat-bread and cakes with which they had received permission to fill all their pockets, in order better to endure the hardships of

campaign life. At last, at eleven o'clock a. m., came their majesties, riding in elegant carriages and accompanied by a brilliant suite. The cadets marched forward in parade, presented arms, and performed their exercises to the delight of all. The whole park echoed with shouts of acclaim, and Eric Ljung reflected whether he ought not to give up his learned career also, seek through the intercession of his patron to attain the honor of becoming a soldier, and astonish Erica Lindelia with a tall grenadier cap.

But still the great surprise was in store. This was not to take place until evening, and with the greatest activity possible, the preparations continued. A part of this was the re-clothing of the cadets in Chinese costume; and not the least of the effects in their uniform was produced by the buttons, now painted green, which Eric Ljung had had the honor of making in the king's own lathe-room. Everything passed off as it should, down to a half-hour before the appointed stroke of the clock, when the most signal event of the day was to be launched.

Count Bertelsköld then summoned Eric, who was standing in the crowd of spectators, a little distance from China. Night-watching, the chill at the breakfast at half past three in the morning, and fasting during the rest of the day—perhaps also too much pastry—were more than the improvised Chinese could endure. One of the cadets, just at the decisive moment, had been taken sick; but nevertheless a single one must not be lacking on the stately occasion.

“Here is the costume,” said the count to Eric. “Dress, in a wink!”

“I?” inquired Eric, in amazement.

“Yes, you. There is no time to waste. You must be a Chinese!”

“But how shall I act then?” asked Eric.

“Have no fear. Do like the others.”

Objections were of no avail. In twenty minutes Eric was a Chinese, and, with his heart in his mouth, was standing at the gate to China.

He had not stood there five minutes, before a little, splendidly equipped mandarin, three and a half feet high, and accompanied by a crowd of the great dignitaries of the Celestial kingdom, arrived at the gate. The little mandarin was so taken up with his new dignity that he did not observe how one of the long, red, silken ribbons, with which his loose breeches were tied, had loosened and fallen on the ground,—an unpardonable fault, which might have cost a *valet* his situation if the great bustle had not been an excuse for anything.

Eric Ljung, who, in his new costume, stood nearest him, recognized the crown prince, bent down and asked if he might tie the ribbon.

The prince looked at him with his large, beautiful eyes, and said, "Chinese, it was you who struck me!"

Eric started. So lively was the imagination of Prince Gustaf, afterwards Gustaf III, that, as he had long heard the queen lament over how some one had *struck him*, he at last believed it himself. But, before Eric had time or ventured to utter a word in his own defense, the prince, with a dignity which was a little childwise, indeed, but which became him excellently, added:

"To-day is the queen's name's-day—princes ought to use such occasions to pardon,—and I pardon you. You have permission to tie my ribbon."

At these words the prince's tutor, Count Bjelke, approached, but the ribbon was already tied, and immediately the royal family arrived.

At six o'clock in the afternoon, the king and queen came, riding in a carriage to China. As soon as her majesty had alighted, the crown prince went to meet her, offering her the gilded keys of the palace on a red velvet cushion, with a broad gold fringe. Louisa

Ulrica was—or pretended to be—extremely surprised, and increased the delight of her good consort by not immediately recognizing the crown prince in the foreign, odd, comical costume. But as soon as he began his little memorized speech, adapted to the occasion, she clasped him with maternal joy in her arms, and there was such a jubilation that the good king, forgetting all the pomp in the delight of being husband and father, and laughing, while the tears glistened in his eyes, embraced his astonished consort and his magnificent little mandarin, inviting all to be welcome to his Oriental palace.

And now advanced all the rest of the crowd of higher and lower Chinese nobility, to offer their humble words of welcome. The queen herself, with the largest gilded key, unlocked the door to the great entrance, and in the most flattering manner expressed her delight at this grand, and of course extremely unexpected, surprise. The royal family, with all the court, were soon sitting at a splendid table in China, and the best music which Sweden could at that time produce, concealed behind branches, discoursed during the whole meal.

At eight o'clock began a theatrical representation, such as had not been seen in Sweden since the times of Queen Christina, and with sixteen acts and thirty-two changes of scenery in all, lasting until two o'clock in the morning. Two operas were given: one was called "*Le berger devenu roi*," and represented a shepherd, who, after many singular adventures, finally, by the wand of a fairy, became king, when—as might be well supposed—he also retained his tender shepherdess as queen. The hero of the second opera, however, was no less a personage than Alexander the Great, and was played by an Italian, Signora Fabrici, who, with voice and manner, delighted the aristocratic audience like a genuine hussar. In the opera, ballets were also interwoven, just as in our days, and many

other bits of art besides, in which, particularly, Frossard, "The Tumbler," distinguished himself. Crotzi, the Italian, won the great admiration of the ladies, with his fine tenor; but the eunuch Squalgi aroused their ridicule, with a voice as keen as a whistle, accompanied by Musical-director Buloz with the tones of a flageolet. Beside the *dansienx* Decarge and Gallodier, the *prcmier danseuse*, Signora Morelli, executed such brilliant pirouettes that the applause overstepped all bounds. The court was beside itself with admiration. Next to Louisa Ulrica, no one could dispute with Morelli the honor of being the queen of China.

CHAPTER XII.

A QUEEN'S POLICY.

THE opera was ended, and the brilliant company scattered, but only to meet a few minutes later in the ball-room. Hither were also invited the most distinguished of the *personnel* of the theater, who, after they had had time to re-costume themselves, were presented before their majesties and gladdened with the most gracious expression of royal favor, accompanied by costly presents—for the gentlemen, gold watches and diamond rings, and for the ladies, jeweled ornaments and ear-pendants of diamonds. The ball began, and was opened by their majesties in their own royal persons. The king led in the dance Baroness Von Ungern Sternberg, *née* Countess Mörner, while the queen honored Count Breteuil, the French ambassador,

with her arm. In the very whirl of delight, politics was not forgotten. The most important leaders of the Hat party, of course with the exception of the absent Count Tessin, were invited to the festival, and were thus the object of a courtesy which ought either to win or lull them. In either case, it ought to inspire esteem and to influence impending events.

It was night, and yet everything seemed to be sunshine. Not for a long time had the Swedish court been so brilliant, the crown glittered with such a dazzling resplendence, or those who wore it seemed to wear it so gracefully. It would seem as though the future, after so much hatred and dissension, was finally dawning in rosy splendor, or, perhaps, that there was no future, that everything lived in the moment which was so short, but seemed so infinite. "*La beauté reprend son empire en Suède*"—Beauty resumes her sway in Sweden—Count Tessin might have said, if he had been present*—so many graces competed for the prize for loveliness this night. Happiness and joy seemed to revive, in that enchanted palace of the Orient, and if any one had said that all that happiness was built upon sand, that that joy on many lips was only a mask to conceal cold, selfish calculations,—who would have believed it? But, without truth—truth in everything,—there is no real happiness, no unmingled joy, either in purple or in wadmál-jacket.

It belonged to the policy of Queen Louisa Ulrica to strengthen the power of the royal house, by bringing about marriage connections between its adherents and the most influential families. So good an occasion as this, when all discord seemed to be forgotten, she did not wish to leave unused. Her keen eyes discovered Count Bertelsköld engaged in an animated conversation with Lady Palmstjerna, daughter of the councilor by the same name, one of the leaders of the Hats.

* He adds, in his journal: "*J'ai vu un temps, où il n'y avait pas 20 jolies visages dans tout Stockholm.*"

After awhile the queen summoned him.

“You have succeeded altogether too well, my dear count, in this pretty arrangement,” said she, “not to have just claim to a reward. Ask a favor of me !”

“Your majesty’s grace has left me nothing to wish,” replied the count.

“Do not persuade me to think that ! It is true, that you have never asked anything ;—another reason for doing so now. Ought a man like you, in the flower of courage, to sigh away all his life in loneliness ?”

We must here, in parenthesis, explain something, which is perhaps unexpected to those who remember the former story. Count Bertelsköld was a widower, after a short married life with Lady Stenbock. It was his mother who had brought about this connection, which, on his part, signified the sacrifice of an older, a long wept, hopeless love. The connection had not been unhappy ; it was founded on a mutual esteem, which both in a high degree deserved, and in time tenderer feelings might perhaps have grown up from that root, if Providence had not determined otherwise. After only three years of wedded life, the count had lost his young wife, who left to him a son and a daughter, of whom the son had seen the world the same day as Prince Gustaf.

“You are a dreamer, my dear Bertelsköld,” continued the queen, with a gracious smile. “Is it indeed I who ought to remind you that for three years now you have been anew the object of the young ladies’ glances ? How does Lady Palmstjerna please you ?”

“I regard her as an agreeable, sensible young woman,” replied the count.

“And you say that, in the same tone with which you would give your opinion of a cannon ! For shame, my dear count, to play the philosopher, where you ought rather be charmed by your success. I wager that if you were Alexander the Great, the young beauty

would not have anything against playing Roxolane for you !”

“Alas ! your majesty, I am not Alexander the Great, and, besides, I have the misfortune not to share the taste of Lady Palmstjerna.”

“And wherein then, wise philosopher ?”

“She maintained that Morelli had large feet; upon which I protested that Crotzi, with his long neck, was by nature designed for a crane.”

“I hardly thought that you could be so bad,” said the queen. “But here is one,” she continued, “who, perhaps better than I, can re-subjugate you to domestic life.”

At these words, she pointed to a troop of little Chinese, who, with a comical solemnity, were marching through the *salon*, led by the crown-prince, with the important object of getting themselves a regular piece of bread and butter in the side room after the abundance of sweetmeats. The queen beckoned one of the boys to her. He was a blonde, handsome little lad, of the same age as the crown-prince, in whose service he had the honor of being enrolled as page.

“See here, little Bernhard,” said the queen, “tell your father that he is to bring you a new mamma !”

The boy blushed, looked the queen full in the face, and answered not a word.

“Of course, you would like very much to have a new mamma ?” continued the queen.

“I would rather have a horse,” said the boy.

“But, if you get a new mamma, you will have a chance every day to eat crown pastry, that you like so well.”

“I do not want to eat crown pastry,” replied little Bernhard Bertelsköld.

“Go and get a piece of bread and butter,” said the queen, half laughing, half vexed over this early spirit of opposition. The boy made a ceremonious bow,

which it had cost him much trouble to learn at dancing school, and passed on.

“I see, my dear Bertelsköld, that everything has conspired against your happiness,” added the queen.

“Your majesty’s favor is a rich recompense for the frown of fortune,” replied the count, who, though secretly well pleased with the opposition of his son, was courtier enough not to answer otherwise.

The king now approached, accompanied by the acting chamberlain, and had the grace to present Signora Morelli, who had spent more time than the others on her change of costume, but also outshone all the court ladies by the splendor of her beauty and the magnificence of her toilet. Louisa Ulrica, already irritated, was too much a woman not to feel a secret repugnance at this sight, and the impression was not diminished when she observed that the eyes of her kind consort were following the beautiful *danseuse* with an unmistakable pleasure. She concealed her feelings, however, under the most gracious flattery, mingled here and there with a scarcely perceptible pin-point.

“Neither Zephyr himself,” said she, “could be more airy, nor Flora more charming. Terpsichore could not more perfectly enchant the habitants of Helicon. Daphne, sighing after her shepherd, could not with more grace tend her sheep; and that little foot is a poisoned arrow, which could wound a thousand hearts.”

“And yet,” interposed the king, who believed himself only sharing the admiration of his consort, “and yet, little Daphne cannot be prevailed upon to accept any proof of our royal favor, in remembrance of the delight she has given us by her incomparable dancing.”

“What?” inquired the queen mockingly, with a glance at Bertelsköld, “is there one more here who stands so uplifted above the lot of all mortals, that she

has not a single wish ungratified? Is it possible, beautiful shepherdess? Not a rival to vanquish, not even a thirst for revenge against anyone whomsoever, who has had the misfortune to trample on your fairy foot?"

The *danseuse* assumed a languishing attitude, cast down her eyes, and entreated that her majesty would allow her to make a private request. She knew perhaps, the little Morelli, that she would have been heard more willingly on some other point, but she knew also who best had power to keep a promise.

"I have guessed rightly, then," replied the queen, as she gave the bystanders a signal to withdraw; "so there is a Celadon, who has been unfaithful to his beautiful shepherdess?"

"No, your majesty," said the *danseuse*, with surprised anger, and cheeks which needed no paint to make them flush. "I have been abominably insulted; and it is only to obey your majesty's command, and fulfil my duty, that I am still at Drottningholm,"

"What do I hear?" said the queen, still in the same sarcastic tone. "Which of the gentlemen of the court has found it possible to be brave enough to lift his presumptuous eyes to so mighty and virtuous a fairy, without being instantly transformed into a stone, by her wand? I suppose," she disdainfully added, "that none of the ladies have ventured to insult you by wearing shorter clothes than you?"

"Quite the opposite," replied the beautiful Italian, with difficulty controlling her rage. "It is I who have too boldly ventured to trouble your majesty with my insignificant person, and therefore most humbly beg for my dismissal from the *corps de ballet*."

"No, Morelli," continued the queen, who was not cruel enough longer to torture a feared rival, and probably also regarded her sufficiently humbled, "if

you speak in such a tone as that, we must take a fearful revenge on the one who threatens to rob our ballet of its most light-footed ornament. Tell it to me, my dear. Perhaps some one has presumed to hiss you?"

"Oh, your majesty! I have been honored with too many plaudits, not to learn to disdain hisses. But they have dared to laugh at me, and that is a thousand times worse."

The queen smiled. "To laugh at you! To laugh at so serious and venerable an object!" and at this her majesty was pleased to wave her superb fan, in order to conceal the irresistible smile which ruffled her royal lips.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DANGEROUS CHINESE IN CHINA.

THE little *danseuse* perceived that she could expect no compassion for her suffered wrongs but she had resolved to be revenged, and had provided herself with a surer means.

"May my gracious queen vouchsafe to pardon," said she, "that I have ventured to trouble her with my trifling concerns, as I have something far more important still to impart."

"Oh!" said the queen, who found great amusement in mocking and humiliating that admired beauty, "all that is lacking is the good counsel that our charming little fairy has still to give us in the affairs of our kingdom. Well, fear nothing! Tell me, candidly, what does our pretty Morelli think of the present situation of Europe? Ought we to conclude any new

alliance? Does my little friend want to be sent as embassadress to Constantinople? I am sure that our brother, the sultan, would be both flattered and touched by it. But by all means speak softly, that Marquis de Breteuil may not hear us,—it might compromise our position toward France, and possibly cost us all our French theater.”

“Your majesty entertains too gracious an opinion of my diplomatic skill,” said the *danseuse*, who had great trouble not to boil over. “My trifling ability does not extend so far. But my humble fidelity reaches farther, and does not permit me to see abominable conspiracies make use of so festive an occasion, to disturb the precious tranquillity of your majesty, and threaten the safety of the realm.”

“Better and better! Oh! indeed, this is divine! Step nearer, Count Bertelsköld—we are going to hear something new. Our bright Morelli has arranged a conspiracy, in order to have the pleasure of saving us with her wand. That will be a *divertissement* which will amuse us indescribably. What shall we call it? It ought to have a piquant title. What do you say of *Le roi devenu berger?*”

Signora Morelli pretended not to understand the allusion, leaned nearer the flashing ear-pendant of the queen, and whispered: “For God’s sake, your majesty, beware! The person who tried to murder the crown prince, in the park of Ulrichsdal, is here in Drottningholm disguised, and is only waiting an opportunity to carry out his terrible design!”

The queen changed color. To Prince Gustaf’s scratch, which, in fact, was already healed, she had indeed not given exactly that construction; but she nevertheless suspected that something lay beneath it, and her suspicions had been not a little increased, when, notwithstanding all pains, no one had succeeded in finding the supposed criminal who had vanished in so mysterious a manner.

She immediately arose, and commanded Morelli to follow her into a private room, adjoining the ball-salon.

“If this is a jest to excite my curiosity, it is a miserable, improper jest, my young friend,” said she in a severe tone, quite unlike that which she had used before.

The *danseuse* threw herself at the feet of the queen, and protested that her words had been dictated only by the most sincere and humble zeal. She had feared too greatly disturbing the queen, and had therefore wished to lead to her discovery in a roundabout way, as it stood in connection with an insult which had been offered to herself, but her majesty had not allowed her to do so, and she was thus compelled to uncover the truth without circumlocution. She described how she had found the delinquent sleeping in the theater—how she, with the rest of the company, had amused herself at his expense—how he, in a brutal manner, had replied to her raillery—how her enemies and those who envied her had already been joking about her new, unpolished lover—how she had suspected him—had had him spied out, and finally intercepted a letter to an unknown woman, probably an accomplice, in the vicinity of Upsala—how, in that, he had, in covert words, described the incident in the park of Ulrichsdal, into which he had stolen under the pretence of botanizing—how he had with him a letter to Count Tessin who was commanded to let him into the palace—how he had been concealed a whole day by some secret accomplice, and afterwards in the darkness of night smuggled to Drottningholm—how Morelli had recognized him, disguised as a Chinese, at their majesties’ reception—how, in the theory of the people, he had sought some opportunity to carry out his evil design, and how, only half an hour ago, with the same intent, he had been among the spectators outside the palace. All this confession was made with tears

and protestations that she, the discoverer of a criminal conspiracy, had not been able to find any peace before she had imparted her discovery to the queen herself.

Louisa Ulrica was too shrewd, not in this important state discovery to see through the little motive of a wounded vanity seeking means to be revenged; but there was, nevertheless, a show of probability in it, and she could not look upon it as an accident that the unknown ruffian carried with him a letter to Count Tessin, and had been so well received by him a few moments before the count had so unexpectedly broken off his relations with the court. All her exasperation against that feared opponent awakened with renewed strength, and contributed to place his supposed accomplice in the most odious light.

“I hope you are wrong, Signora,” said she, “but in case you are right, which will probably soon be seen, I promise you as perfect a revenge as you can ever wish. Go mingle in the dance, and let nothing be observed. I will summon you when you are needed.”

With these words the queen returned to the ball-room, where the little *danseuse*, at whose discomfiture the court had but now been amusing itself, became the object of general admiration and curiosity, after she had been honored with so high a private audience.

Ignorant of all the traitorous plots of which he had been accused, Eric Ljung meantime stood amid the the crowd of other curious ones outside the little pleasure palace, where to him it was a pleasure as unusual as fascinating, to watch the grand ball which was held before uncovered windows. He had not yet found occasion to lay aside his Chinese costume; and while the rest of the Chinese, all of them cadets of high and noble birth, had been invited to sup in the palace, he, who only held the dignity of a substitute, had been left out of the reckoning. He did not suffer from hunger or

thirst, for wheat bread, ale and mumma* had been passed around in the crowd. But it was nearly morning. Tired and sleepy, Eric still remained, trying to recognize, by the light of the wax-candles, the brilliant forms which were passing hither and thither within. Now it was the wife of an imperial councilor in wide hoop-petticoat, now a court miss in pockets and enormous sleeves, now a diplomat in solemn queue, now a gentleman of the bed-chamber white with powder on the back of that kind of middle garments which at that time formed the transition between mourning coat and dress-coat. Eric now recognized the splendid form of the queen, in that deference with which all yielded place wherever she went; now he saw the friendly face of the king, which was sunshine all night long; now he saw the window shaded by the tall figure of Count Bertelsköld, his protector; and now again it was Signora Morelli, his beautiful enemy, tripping by with studied step. Sometimes again all this display was hidden from his view by moisture, which in the warmth within settled on the window-panes, but it was seldom long before some of their excellencies or their gentlemen wiped the panes with their handkerchiefs to look at the illuminated park and the animated crowd of people. For the entertainment of the court and people, there was also a display of fireworks; rockets and squibs flew the whole night, lighting up with their splendor the dim shady walks and the gable of the large palace which was seen in the distance.

The crowd of people made their observations. It was said that the great display of fireworks was reserved till to-morrow, when the queen herself was going to light a fire-dove. The *personnel* within underwent review, and neither Hat nor Cap was spared.

"There is Düben," it was said, "the queen's private secretary. He must have manufactured some lies in his days."

*A mixed drink composed of small-beer, porter, and sugar.

“There is old Bjelke,” said another, “he who in '39 received discharge on gray paper, but he feels just as big, probably, for all that.”

“He is nothing to young Bjelke, his son,” interrupted a third. “See! there he goes with the prince, and is gazing at the ceiling with vanity. Heaven pardon me if I do not believe that he fancies himself a better fellow than even his royal highness!”

“Do look at that prim gentleman!” laughed a fourth. “Do you know who he is? Why, that is Mr. Dalin, who makes verses, and any one who makes verses believes himself fit for anything, so of course he is royal instructor. It is said that the prince cannot speak anything but verse, and when he is hungry it will not do to say, ‘Dear mother, give me a slice of bread and butter;’ but Dalin has taught him to pipe at such times :

‘The Gothic lion old of hunger soon is dead,
But the whelp is heard to cry, “Spread me a piece of bread!”’

This not very elegant gibe was rewarded by a murmur of applause from the adherents of the Hats in the crowd, for all those before mentioned were Caps. But these again had *their* adherents, who were revenged by not less mocking witticisms as soon as one of the Hats showed himself.

“See! there is Nordencrantz, who has turned councilor of commerce because he can make gold out of salt. That is an awfully grand name he now flaunts. It is very well remembered when his name was plain Backmanson, and he was consul at Lisbon, with his six öre per barrel in perquisites!”

“There is Ungern Sternberg—he who was state master-of-horse last winter at the coronation. For the sake of peace, he is not general, and does not wear the chain of the order of the seraphim. You see, he was one of those who, in the year '42, ran away from the Russians in Finland and came back to Stockholm to fence with fine words.”

“And Major Rudbeck too, who is strutting over there with his royal order of the sword! Everybody remembers how he got a hundred ducats and a golden sword because, in the year '43, for three days he peeped after the Dalecarlians from the windows of the palace in Riddarholm.”

“For shame!” cried one of the adherents of the Hats. “Rudbeck fought like a man in Åland. He does not side with the Russians, as the ‘Nightcaps’ do!”

“Like the ‘Hatmakers,’ perhaps!” retorted one of the opposite party. “How many French silver dollars do you think they gobbled up at the last diet?”

The answer was a cuff by the insulted opponent, and before long there was a tumult which threatened to degenerate to a common fist fight between the two parties, whose ardor out-doors was animated by the ale-barrels, while Hats and Caps in-doors danced in the most brotherly unanimity.

Then the dance within was seen to cease and the dancers to gather in scattered groups, who seemed to be asking each other about something which had taken place.

Before anything was yet known outdoors about the cause of such an interruption, Eric Ljung felt himself seized by the arm and drawn out of the crowd. He looked around. It was the valet, Feif.

“*Wech? Gleich ins Boot!*” whispered the German.

“What new trick is it now?” asked the boy, with vexation. “I am sleepy,—let me go home!”

“*Nicht resonniren! Gleich putzwech, oder der Teufel soll dich holen, verfluchter Junge!*” continued the valet, drawing him with him; and it was probably the longest speech that surly messenger of the king had made since his arrival in Sweden.

Resistance availed nothing. A few minutes later Eric was sitting in a sloop, which, propelled by brisk rowers, shot from the shore, while behind him in the

park an increasing din arose, in which he could still, in the distance, distinguish the words: "The Chinese! The Chinese! Catch the Chinese!"

CHAPTER XIV.

CAPTAIN NEPTUNUS GAST.

IT will perhaps not be difficult for the reader to guess the occasion of Eric Ljung's new adventure. The way it was brought about was very simple. The queen had confided the secret to the king; the king had smiled at it, and assured her that he knew the matter better,—but he dreaded a sensation, did not wish to expose Morelli to the displeasure of the queen, resolved to set the matter right to-morrow, and tried to turn the horribly proposed conspiracy to jest. Impetuous as ever, the queen had meantime initiated the prince's tutor into the secret; he again, as we have seen, had not the best opinion of the botanist in the park of Ulrichsdal, and had hastened to give a signal to the officer on duty. The officer had given orders to seize the suspected person, and the innocent young man would thus, without doubt, have been thrown into prison as a murderer and traitor, if his majesty had not secretly found opportunity to give a signal to his *valet*, Feif. The ball had been disturbed a moment by the rumor of some criminal plot, and the people outside had improved upon the story, so that a plan was finally spoken of to blow up all China. All this tempest in a teapot had, however, just as hastily passed away. With the gracious smile on the lips of the royal pair, calm and gayety also reflected from those of the court;

and in the crowd outside, the matter passed for a trick with which the royal couple had chosen to amuse themselves at the expense of the court. Thus the day dawned upon noise and hilarity, and the wax candles burned very yellow and sleepily in the sunshine, when the dancers separated at six o'clock on that light summer morning.

When Count Bertelsköld sought his *protégé*, he had disappeared. And when the beautiful Morelli asked after the victim of her little cabal, she had for her reward the vexation of reaping for her pains only the cross glances of their majesties and a stern order from Count Bertelsköld not to meddle hereafter with important subjects of state, other than the ballet.

There was one other who might have given an explanation of that dark question which so few had unraveled, and that was little Prince Gustaf. But, after all his toils, he was at this time in the morning sleeping the sleep of innocence and dreaming now of China and now of the Azore Islands.

Pursuant to the orders of the king, the student Eric Ljung, the hero of all these surprising adventures, found himself by the next day—or rather the same day—on the vessel *Hope*, belonging to the Larsson trading-house, and lying at the wharf of Stockholm ready to set sail. She was bound for home—*Wasa*—with return cargo of iron and salt, after having supplied the Swedish metropolis with *Wasa*-rye, butter, pork, herring and salmon.

Eric's delight over this happy turn in his fate was not diminished by the fact that the vessel *Hope* was an old acquaintance, in whose rigging he had many a time climbed as a child, when, with his mother, he had visited their aristocratic relatives in *Wasa*. The *Hope* was thus not one eternally blooming youth, as one might suppose by the name, but an old shell, which for more than twenty summers had tested all weathers and winds between *Furnsund* and the shore-islands of *Wasa*. In

this time she had torn many a good sail, and had become wretched throughout in everything which pertained to a finer sea-toilet; the bow was pretty well galled, the back-stays worn, the gunwale patched, the capstan askew, and the companion hatch greatly resembled a dilapidated dog-kennel. Such was the childhood memory Eric had of the Hope; but he also knew that she was a good and capable transport, which had hauled many a pretty penny in her day to the owner's firm, and jogged leisurely past the rocks of Gadde, while others had crept into the Rata before the north wind from the Bothnian Sea. He was therefore not a little surprised when he saw the good sloop in Stockholm re-painted and adorned in its old age, about as an honest fish-woman, who, in her later years, having received promotion and dignity from her mistress, might have bought herself a new shawl. Had not Eric so well recognized the old figure-head at the prow, carved by a Munsala boy and representing an aged goddess who had long ago struck against some rough object and in the *coup* lost her Olympian nose, he would scarcely have been able to believe his eyes, so elegant and aristocratic did the Hope now look beside the many younger beauties at the wharf of Stockholm.

Just after Eric had arrived on board he was met by another old friend, not less changed than the Hope herself, and that was the captain of the ship.

His name was Neptunus Gast,—a very singular name, no doubt, from beginning to end, but the beginning, at least, had its natural cause, for the man's father had been a sailor, body and soul, and had, therefore, wished to give to the son, who from the cradle was destined for the same vocation, a name which ought to carry with it luck at sea. It, nevertheless, for a long time appeared as though the Gast* had obtained the ascendancy, for everybody from Wasa to the wharf knew that the captain, in his younger days,

* Gast = an evil spirit.

had been a hard case. Though somewhat heavy for his height, which did not exceed five feet, he had received from nature a broad chest, strong arms, a thick head, and jovial humor, but also, unfortunately, so considerable a portion of negligence and laziness, now and then increased by a glass of grog too much, that he made a wretched shift on shore, and still worse, if anything, at sea. A sailor he was—to that he had been baptized; but a dog's life did he lead for all that. He began his career as cook, and succeeded, innumerable times, in spoiling both peas and porridge, before he finally advanced to the rank of ordinary seaman. His course of study might be described with a single word—cat-o'-nine-tails; for with that he was wakened in the morning, with that cheer he was treated at breakfast, dinner and supper, and with that he went every evening to his hammock. What he thereby gained in theory and practice may remain unsaid; but at least he acquired a back of sole-leather, which did not mind trifles, and thus habit became second nature. People maintained that Gast, the ordinary seaman, never slept well if he had not previously been prepared with a flogging, as he would otherwise fancy himself getting it in dreams. Once, when this method became too tiresome to him, he undertook to run away in Öresund, but after a couple of years, wearying of the lack of blows, he came discreetly back, when, to his delight, he was immediately treated to the old fare. At length he had—Heaven knows how—with the aid of his father's old friends, learned the necessary navigation, and so by degrees rose step by step to the higher dignities of sailor, gunner, and pilot. After he had in this character sailed some twenty years, almost always with ill luck, but taking the sea and the world rather easy, it happened one fine spring day that the captain of a Wasa ship happened to capsize in the harbor and drown, just as the vessel was about to sail. In a weak moment the ship-owner, Alderman Blöm, allowed him-

self to be prevailed upon to appoint pilot Gast as commander of the vessel; but he did not long congratulate himself upon his bargain. For after his new skipper, who continually had contrary wind whatever way he turned, had spun out the whole summer in one trip to Stockholm, and had taken that matter tranquilly, like everything else, Captain Gast happened one fine September day, at noon, in clear sunlight and with fair wind, to run aground at Sandhamn, while he was taking a siesta, and the helmsman was playing cards for the girls. When this was accomplished, the captain with his crew went ashore, had a good time a couple of days in the village, and waited for the vessel to get afloat again. And this very properly took place shortly afterward; but as it chanced to occur during a dreadful storm, it happened that the whole thing went to the devil, and not much else was saved but the cat-o'-nine-tails of the ship, with which the captain was wont to apply the memories of his youth to the backs of the crew, and which was commonly known under the name of "the cat." This cat Captain Gast very properly brought home to his employer, Alderman Blöm, as a souvenir of the ship; but when Blöm was unreasonable enough not to content himself with that, but wished the souvenir on his captain's back, Captain Gast put his inventory into his pocket, and, as though nothing had happened, went with perfect tranquillity to another vessel to begin his career of pilot anew.

At the time when Eric Ljung, as a child, had become acquainted with this remarkable man, Captain Gast—for he retained the rank—had, with his tranquil humor and his everlasting ill-luck, fallen into very straitened circumstances, and by degrees again stepped down the ladder of honor to his former rank of common sailor. Ragged, tarry, and tipsy, he had then been a laughing-stock for the boys of the town; and more than once Eric had been along, when those little

pests had for a quid of tobacco bought of Gast the right to beat him with all their might.

Nothing had any effect on that well-pitched jacket; Gast only drew his head into his shell, like a tortoise, and then let the whole swarm buzz around him, pounding to their heart's content with fists and feet, till they at last grew weary.

Eric, therefore, hardly believed his eyes, when the first who met him on board was the very same so often cudgeled friend, Captain Neptunus Gast,—now captain of the *Hope*, the largest ship in *Wasa*, and belonging to a firm which had the reputation of being extremely careful in the choice of commanders for its vessels. A great change, forsooth, must have taken place in the once so used-up tar, who might now be two and fifty years old. And this was also instantly apparent in his outer man. His stubbed figure, which was once a compound of dirt, tobacco, and pitch, was now enveloped in an orderly and new kavaj, or jacket, of Hollandish frieze, with splendid black-horn buttons. The man was washed, combed, and shaved, wore a span-new oilcloth hat, red neck-cloth, a watch with seals, the breeches of a gentleman, and a pair of polished boots. Had not everything still appeared somewhat overdone, one might have taken him for an arrant fop. There was scarcely a grain of dust on his jacket, and the enormous quid had ceded its place to a little imperceptible bit of fine-cut, which was occasionally renewed from a little silver box. But, notwithstanding all this, something had disappeared, and that was the good-natured, imperturbably tranquil, careless and phlegmatic element in the whole look and bearing of the man. Eric found, instead, something gloomily vigilant, almost distrustful, in his manner; and that pleased Eric less than had his old-time rags.

As well first as last to find some reason for so singular a transformation in a person who had once seemed to everyone to be only a bad penny, we shall

anticipate a little, and give an account of what Eric during the trip was able to gather from the crew as to how their captain had become a new man.

At that time, when the social position and personal appearance of Captain Gast had seemed the darkest, that is at the time when he was generally regarded ripe to fall as a whiskey-soaked pauper, a burden upon the community (there was no Sailor's Home at that time), one of his former comrades, who had charge of shipping for Larsson, had in pity taken poor Gast with him as a sailor on a trip to Stockholm. The voyage out had been long, very stormy, and exposed to great adventure, but with this the evil spirit seemed to have taken his due, so far as it concerned the man with that name, and left the place to Neptunus. For not only had the man's return trip been the quickest and luckiest that any vessel had for a long time had, but the sailors, who are always a superstitious class, made the observation that every time Neptunus Gast was on board the ship constantly had fair wind and remarkable luck. Ships which had hitherto been laggards at sea and far behind all others, arrived in this way sooner than any other. It was as though all the elements had conspired to expedite the voyage without the least delay or ill-luck. Vessel, captain, crew, rigging, sails and chart might be of any degree of worthlessness; if Gast was only along everything went well. If there was a calm, the sails seemed all the same to swell before unknown winds, and the vessel went. If there was a storm, so much the better, for then there was more rapid progress. If there was fog, darkness and tempest, it signified nothing; all could go securely to their hammocks; for the ship went of itself, always right and without harm. The cargo and business had the same luck. Everything was sold for the highest possible price, and the firm gained round sums of money. They then began, instead of making one trip to Stockholm in a summer,

which had hitherto been the usual custom, to sail two, and finally three times. Everything went with equally good fortune, and the profit was three-fold.

CHAPTER XV.

SAILOR LÅNGVIK'S STORY.

CAPTAIN NEPTUNUS GAST, himself, was transformed at the same time as his fortune. He stopped drinking, and became neat, sober, orderly, industrious, in short, a miracle to all who had known him in his worse days. People stared at him as at a prodigy. The next gamin who presumed to want to cudgel him for a quid of tobacco, was obliged instead to taste his "cat," that notorious cat, for the cat remained the captain's faithful companion—and that was the end of that raillery. Captain Gast became a reputable man, climbed up once more on the ladder of honor, paid old alehouse debts, and was careful about making new ones.

One fine day he was summoned to Alderman Larsson, the younger son of the representative, who for a while previously had been having bad luck with his ships. "See here," said the alderman, who was also a shrewd merchant, though less sound than his father. "It is said, captain, that you have become a well-behaved man lately."

Gast blinked his eyes, and opined that it was very possible.

"It is said too, captain, that you have luck at sea," continued the alderman.

Captain Gast blinked still worse, and thought it went tolerably well.

“Let us be candid,” said the ship-owner; “father will not hear you spoken of—he looks upon you as a vagabond, and thinks that you might again, with fair wind, sail aground, as you did with Blöm’s ship. But I am of a different opinion; and as I am the one who manages the business, I ask you if you have a mind to command our ship, the Hope?”

At this the captain pretended to be a little unwilling, but after good monthly wages had been agreed upon and the right for the commander himself to load the deck and cabin, Gast accepted the proposal and became master of the Hope.

All this, and more besides, the crew of the Hope knew, to tell to Eric Ljung.

In the steerage the captain was not exactly well spoken of. His men claimed that if he had now become just as orderly as he had once been careless, he had also become just as stingy as he had before been profligate—indeed, seven times worse. He who once took the world so easy, was now surly, quick-tempered, and cross to the men. His letting the cat claw was his affair—that was a part of the business. The worse circumstance was that he cut down the rations, victualed with strong butter, musty groats, thin pork and pebbly peas, and took a couple less water-casks for the voyage in order to have more lading room. He did not, like other captains, give a holiday in port; and had not the work been lighter and the pay higher here than on other vessels, on account of the strange luck the Hope had, the sailors swore that none of them would sail any longer with that “old ape, who had evidently sold himself, body and soul, to the evil one himself.”

At Eric’s age one does not fix such matters very firmly on the mind. He had told the captain his name and had been received on board as a relative of the proprietor, but had to pay six plåts for fare and board,

which at that time was regarded as scandalously dear. Beyond that bargain he had not spoken a word with the captain. He received a vacant bed under the roof in the pilot house, near the cabin-way, two feet wide, five feet long, and barely two feet between the bed-bottom and the ceiling. He could neither sit up nor lie straight, but it was all the same. His food he received with the rest of the folks, all of them an equally large or an equally small portion of the musty porridge and the pebbly peas; but that was all the same,—the captain himself had no better fare. And then, indeed, what did it signify to Eric, if he remembered with regret the dainty table of Drottningholm, or the fragrant beds of Hammarby, when all day long he had the blue sky above him, the free ocean beneath him, a fresh breeze around him, and the thoughts of the dear old home which he was soon to see again, continually before him!

If Eric could have ordered wind and weather himself, he could not have wished a more charming voyage. From the minute the *Hope* heaved anchor, and left the wharf of Stockholm behind, she had an even and favoring breeze, a clear sky and steady progress. If it did not go at eleven knots speed, it still went day and night, incessantly, at six or seven without sheering constantly forward, and that paid better, so the sailors thought, than dancing the “English Three” without getting out of the spot.

Within four or five days the *Hope* had passed the Quark, approached Björkö archipelago, and one fine morning it was hoped that with favoring wind she would anchor at night in the harbor of Wasa. Eric, who was on the best footing with the crew, approached an old sailor by the name of Abraham Långvik, who, on account of his near acquaintance with the tar bucket, was known by the pet name of Långpyts,* and who now sat on a coil of rope on the fore-deck mending a

* Pyts = bucket.

sail. "Långvik! When do you think we shall get sight of Wasa light-house?" inquired the boy.

Långpyts opined that they should probably crack a couple of teeth on the peas before that time.

"But I mean to sleep at aunt's to-night," said Eric confidently.

"Well, I wish some one would swear to that," responded the sailor, shifting his quid.

There was something in the answer which made Eric ask, "What do you mean by that, Långvik? You see we have a fine southwester, and are dancing ahead at a dizzy rate."

"I think," continued the sailor, without lifting his eyes from his work, "it would be well if we could all swear to having a chance to sleep in port."

"The inlet is said to be dangerous, it is true, but can you suppose, Långvik, that the Hope, which ought to find her way without a pilot in a pitch-dark night, is so stupid as to run aground in the clearest sunshine?"

"I hardly think that," was the reply, "so long as the hour has not come when *that other one* takes his own."

"Do you really believe that the captain has sold himself to the devil?" laughed the boy.

"See here, my good young sir," said the sailor bluntly, "you have pawed so long in that Latin print, I can understand, that at last you neither believe in God nor the other one. But I will tell you something: you are not to teach an old sailor the compass. I have my needle, which points straight to our Lord; but where the captain's may point, that one knows who has pulled him out of his water-logged condition and put his hull in running order. Before the day comes to an end, you can call Långpyts a mole, if I have not spoken truly."

"Take care, Långvik, that I do not take you at your word!" said Eric jokingly. "That is not the

first time a good-for-nothing fellow has got upon his feet again, and the whole trouble is, that the captain has become greedy in older days."

"Have you learned at school, Eric, that a man, or a gast, can creep out of his own skin? I have sailed with Gast, and for many a long year there was not a rag in all his rigging that I did not know by heart. But if that Gast, who is now standing on the stern-deck, holding lookout, is any more like the Gast who used to be my cabin-mate than I am like a dean in Åbo, I will never lay hands on a capstan again. The hull is the same, except that the deck is washed a little, and the scuttle is perhaps ornamented with paint; but, beyond that, there is another captain on board, and he is going to have his own."

"What do you mean by that, Långvik?"

"I mean nothing. But it stands written in the log-book, that he whom I do not care to name—he is sure to take his own. Never has any boat had better wind in the sails than ours; but you see, that other one is of such a sort, that what he gives with the little finger he takes back with the long one. Never has a firm gained so much as Larsson by the Hope, but you see, it has leaked out the more in other quarters. No merchantman pays such good wages to its men as ours, either; but one and all may look well to themselves, when they have wife and children, for *one* of the Hope's crew never comes back. This is now the seventh voyage I have sailed on the vessel since Gast became captain. The first trip, old Petterson went overboard in the Baltic. The second time it was little Matt, from Wörå,—he who always went with a cock's feather in his cap, and winked at all the girls in the village. The third trip, while we were unloading in Stockholm, the carpenter tumbled into the big hatchway, and broke his neck. The fourth voyage, the cook drank himself to death, in Öregrund. The fifth trip,

the cabin boy ate rat-poison, which the captain had baked in flour—for that time we had a cargo of flour, in the year of bad crops. The sixth trip, the captain lay at Umeå, and was about to sail out, with custom-papers, but happened to capsize, and, as the contract was not yet fulfilled, that other one took, instead, Big Petter, from Replot, he who had lost his right ear by a saber cut during the Hussar year, and who happened to be along in the sloop. But you see now, on our seventh voyage, everything has gone extraordinarily well—no accident to any of us, either on the out or return trip. And so I am wondering which of us to-day is going to heave the log after bullheads, before we anchor in Wasa harbor. If it is I, no matter,—I have made up account with our Lord, and stand ready to veer, when he calls me out of my old hammock to his new morning watch. But I do not want it to be you, Eric; you look to be still able to hold your course here in the world. And keep your eye on the harbor up there, I tell you, although you have lumbered yourself with deck-loading at school. Such things are thrown overboard in a heavy sea; and in order to keep clear of the breakers, one must steer straight for the light-house.”

At these words, the morning bell rang for breakfast, and Eric sought in vain to get rid of various strange thoughts. With all his new learning, he was not altogether free from the prejudices of his time, which, here in the north, still continued to live, in their full power, while further south they broke sharply against the free thinking of Voltaire and the scientists. The superstitious story of the old sailor revived in Eric's memory stories which he had heard in his childhood, and had long since forgotten. He remembered having heard his mother tell something like it; he did not remember of whom, but the old belief that Fortune always takes with the other hand what she has munificently bestowed with the one, ran as vividly in Eric's

mind as though he had heard the same before. Who could it be that his mother had meant?

Meantime the day continued to be fine, the wind fair, and the richly laden Hope calmly and safely ploughed her even furrow through the curling billows of the Bothnia. She ran into the archipelago, without the least accident, pursued the well-known channel through sound and fiords, passed the light-house, and then, shortening her swelling sails, went with moderated speed up the already shoaly channel which led to the more ancient so-called Old Harbor. With intense delight did Eric recognize those shores where he had so often swam and angled as a child. All unpleasant impressions had blown away with the fresh southwester, and he could now, with undivided joy, think of the gladness of soon having an opportunity to embrace his beloved mother, his brothers and sisters, and all the old friends at home.

The goal was reached, and everything had passed off happily. Triumphantly Eric approached the old Långpyts, who stood ready to attend to the jib in the fore. "Mole! mole!" he cried, "only look out for the cat, when we come ashore!"

"I am no mole yet, before the anchor is cast," replied the sailor, ready to brace the yards.

"Shorten the jib! Clew the foresail!" sounded the captain's voice.

"Shorten the jib! Clew the foresail!" replied the usual echo of the sailors.

The command was obeyed. The ship, with only her main top-gallant sail unfurled, glided handsomely and smoothly into the harbor, whose shores were lined with curious spectators; for in Wasa it did not happen every day that so large a ship, and so polished and elegant too, as the Hope was now, danced like a doll into the harbor.

"Mole! mole!" cried Eric anew.

"*Wast lite!*" replied the sailor, with an expression

which, in the East Bothnian Swedish, signifies "Wait a little!"

"Clear anchor! Fire the cannon!" again sounded the captain's command.

"Clear anchor! Fire the cannon!" sounded the echo from the deck.

The order was executed. The customary salute, a never-neglected welcome-greeting, boomed from the prow, but this time with a sharp and ill-boding report. Smoke enveloped the whole fore-deck, and when it cleared away the old Långpyts was seen lying full-length on the deck without a sign of life. Unfortunately, the gunner who had loaded the cannon had forgotten that it had been loaded before, but not discharged, upon the departure from Stockholm. The double charge had burst the barrel into a hundred pieces, and one of the pieces had struck Abraham Långvik, surnamed Långpyts, who was standing by, straight in the forehead. No one else was hurt; but the honest sailor, as he himself had predicted, had been called by the Lord out of his old hammock to a new morning watch.

CHAPTER XVI.

KING ADOLF FREDERICK IN FINLAND.

IN the summer of the year 1752 something extraordinarily important and rare took pace in Finland. "The Sun," "The Moon," "Charles's Wain," "Alexander Magnus," "Hercules," "Orpheus," "Diogenes," and whatever the poets of that time could, by the sweat of their brows, invent that was elegant, magnifi-

cent and exceedingly illustrious,—he himself, in a word, the king, the father of the country, Adolf Frederick the great, Adolf Frederick the gentle, etc., etc., etc., delighted that country with a precious and gracious visit. Up to the reign of Gustaf II Adolf, and including it, all—or almost all—the kings and regents of the realm of Sweden had, many a time and oft, not only visited Finland, but also thought it well to spend several months here, whole winters at a time. But from and including the time of Christina, that is, from the time when Sweden became a great power, those illustrious visits with poor relations had altogether ceased. More than a hundred years had now elapsed—unless one counts the visit of Charles XI to Åland and Torneå—since this honor and joy had happened to that remote land. That Adolf Frederick, who ordinarily enjoyed remaining in his pleasant retirement, was now the first to subject himself to the difficulties of such a journey, was not unlike him, the kind-hearted good man, who would have liked to see everybody content and happy in his whole kingdom. But then what an extraordinary subject was this for humble demonstrations of joy and bombastic incense from Tom, Dick, and Harry, who, with phrases more carefully turned than the finest boxes of his own workmanship, descended like a swarm of gnats around the poor king, not leaving him one breath in peace!

Never, here in the north, has so much humble fiddle-faddle cringed, as before that majesty without power. Never have so many ornamental flowers of eloquence and highly stilted exercises of genius been dispensed as before that crown of gilt paper, that throne on which sat a good and honest man who passed for a king. Those many well-meant humble speeches and eulogistic rhymes, of which some have been printed in a separate book, some in the learned periodicals of that time, but the greater part of which have probably been forever lost to an amazed posterity, began indeed

before the departure of his royal majesty from Stockholm on June 12 of the remarkable year mentioned, across the sea of Åland, and was further continued during the whole of the royal progress through Nyland, Tavastehus, Åbo and the province of Björneborg, East Bothnia, North and West Bothnia, Angermanland, Medelpad, Helsingland, Gestrikland and Upland, and did not at all cease with the king's happy return, August 10th, to Drottningholm, but long afterward continued to constitute a rich and pleasing subject for the prolific poetic pens of that time. Here are some some quaint and amusing examples:

One poet asserts, the day before the departure, that hardly in two centuries had Finland beheld such a rarity, so that it was now "laughing with delight," while all Sweden was seized with a "reasonable pain." Another affirms that,

"Afar by Kumo's strand,
The Lojo's waves, returning,
Tell of a people burning
With joy to kiss thy hand."

There was presumed to be a great crowd. The joy which at that time "flowed in tears" is said to have broken the bond of the tongue, so that

"Eloquent are all:
Welcome, our cheering sun!
Light to chill Kjemi sending,
And warmth and radiance blending
Round Kjelti's corners dun."

The learned, however, found that intoxication of delight too simple, and in the most resounding Latin strove to invoke the assistance of all the gods and goddesses of Olympus, particularly for the dreaded voyage across the sea of Åland. Lövenskiöld, counselor of the exchequer, thought even that not fully worthy the theme, but had a formal manifesto printed, with many learned notes, under the title, "*Elegia Votivà ad*

Magnum Ducatum Finlandiæ," beginning with the following pompous words:

" Aura, extolle caput, choreos age, Fennia, lætas,
Gloria quanta tua est, quam tibi fausta dies!
Exoptata dies! Nova jam tibi Secula surgunt,
Cum *Patriæ* temet gestit adire Pater.*

The 19th of June his majesty arrived in the royal galley Seraphim at the fortress of Sveaborg, then in process of construction, and the following day delighted Helsingfors with his presence. Unhappily, all the speeches and verses declaimed on this occasion have been destroyed by the tooth of time. It is only known that it was a Saturday, that the reception was magnificent, that the burgomaster, Henrik Pipping, had a laborious time, that his royal majesty was entertained at the residence of the prefect, Count Gyllenborg, and that on Sunday his majesty attended service at the church of the town; but whether it was old Pastor Fortelius, or the learned rector, Magister Jonas Crook, who then dispensed the lilies of Sharon from the pulpit, is not recorded. But what is not forgotten in the annals of that time, is how Helsingfors had the favor, on midsummer-night itself, of celebrating the name's-day of the father of the country in his own sublime presence, of which much might be told which cannot properly be mentioned here.

The anonymous minstrel, Hjalmar by name, who, in forty-five Swedish stanzas more than usually sweet and ringing, printed by the late Petter Jöran Nyström in Stockholm, describes the king's Finnish journey, expresses himself concerning the stay in Helsingfors in the following pleasing manner:

" Fields that are thick with luxuriant corn,
To thee bow the full ears they carry;
Shepherd with loor and his lass with her horn
To gather their herds do not tarry:
Sweetly and clearly the summer-birds sing

*Aura! lift up thy head! O Finland! dance and be joyful!
What an honor is thine! How glad is this day so auspicious!
Longed-for day! And around thee the unseemly centuries circle,
As to thy shores draw nigh the feet of our country's father!

Wherever the summer-winds ramble;
Bright is the bloom that the fair flowers fling
Where children in grassy groves gambol.

“ ‘Welcome! thrice welcome the gentle king
And sire of the land we hold dearest!’

‘Long live our Adolf!’ the wild echoes ring
And answer where’er thou appearest!

Since of thy name’s-day we’ve rung the sweet chime,
Thy name by our memories be cherished—

E’er be defended from envy and time,

Till Finland’s last brave son hath perished!”

On the 27th of June the king departed for Borgå, and here, besides other festive arrangements, the students had, with sweat and toil, erected two pyramids at the entrance of the college, supplied with no less than eight pompous inscriptions by Magister Johan Borgström, professor of logic and mathematics, of which it may be sufficient to give the fourth in the order :

“In communis gaudii cumulatissimi,

Subjectionis devotissimæ,

Fidei integerrimæ,

Et obsequii consumatissimi

Tesseractam

A musis Borgoënsibus consecratam.”*

The story of all the tokens of joy and homage with which King Adolf Frederick was received in Finland would alone be sufficient to fill a book of greater compass than the account of the triumphal march of the Marii, Cæsar, and Pompey. Suffice it to say that the king was everywhere greeted with an enthusiasm, in which, beneath the froth of humble eloquence, could easily be discovered much real attachment which the good monarch well deserved. In Åbo, where his majesty stopped at the house of the governor-general, Count Rosen, Gabriel Timotheus Lütke-man, the court chaplain, delivered an eloquent discourse on

*As a token of the most exalted common joy, the most profound submissiveness, the most unswerving fidelity, and the most perfect obedience, consecrated by the muses of Borga.

the queen's birthday, in which, among other professors of the school, Magister Martin Gråå undertook a religious poem of welcome, which has not yet wholly withered under the snow of a century, and in its good intent is less ostentatious than many others of the same sort. With a good-natured smile, posterity reads what perilous risks to the kingdom and himself King Adolf Frederick is regarded to have undertaken when he sailed to Finland on his splendid ship and rode around the country in his magnificent carriage. In five verses the king is extolled because he "will not be sparing of his precious life," but,

" Finland to please,
Entrusts his life on roaring seas,
In forests wild, on fallow plains,
And rocky steeps ascending,
Each nook to scan with loving pains
Before his journey's ending,
Confirming grace and rights to all
His faithful subjects, great and small."

When his majesty, during the journey through Lochteå in East Bothnia, was pleased to eat breakfast out-doors by the roadside, a monument of stone was erected to the perpetual remembrance of so remarkable an event, which, to the innocent wonder of posterity, still remains standing. At the visit in Torneå the king was compared to the midnight sun, which at that time of the year shines in the extreme north, etc., etc.

The honest Finns might, however, make as much of their king as they were able, still their loyal delight, in comparison with the joy of the Swedes on the return of the king, was like the awkward courtesies of a bear beside a brilliant and glittering display of fireworks. The academy of Upsala arranged a special celebration, with an oration in Latin verse, and on command of the queen discussed "the relative ranks of the sciences." In the poem of welcome, by Mårten Hedenberg, among other things it is said :

“As rolls the circling sun the heavenly arch around,
 Until remotest lands are by his radiance found,
 Behold ! our king hath thus illumined with his light
 The home of Bjarms* and Finns and Thule’s arctic night.”

In the garden of Drottningholm, Louisa Ulrica, in honor of the safe return of her consort, had an eclogue in three acts performed, which is very entertaining to read. On this occasion, “Glädjetanker” (Glad thought) was also written by A. Nicander, who told how all the divine powers of water and air had contributed their aid to the journey, so that even

“Scaly steeds of old Triton their manes upheld in the tempest.
 * * * *
 Heav’n with joy was astir, and earth with gladness was trembling.
 * * * *
 Out of the hollow metal, the wild taratantara echoes,
 While an excellent noise of shot peals forth from the cannon.”

In Stockholm there was no less jubilee. Verses and flattering speeches rained there indiscriminately, so that the ears rung. The models of the royal names-day’s bubbles of our time, are re-found in those harmless rhymes of joy, in which the king and the sun were inseparable as Orestes and Pylades,—in which the praise of the Charleses is promised to “the hero who our country’s weal attends and sheathes the reeking steel,” and the names of Adolf and Louisa are

“Adored from Bält to fiord of Liti;
 Happy the lot of our fair city,
 To have them both in her embrace !”

A sorry slip one of these well-meaning poets made in the following :

*Bjarmland is supposed to have comprised that part of northern Russia which now constitutes the provinces of Perm, Wistka, Wologda, and the eastern part of the province of Archangel, an area of over 20,000 geographical miles. Its principal emporium was situated at the mouth of the Dwina river. The inhabitants were called Bjarms, and were the descendants of Finns and Inens. During the course of several centuries they formed a free and independent state.

“ *Naso* of Greeks and their wondrous war sings,
 And many a hero’s proud story,
 Had he had thee too, O noblest of kings,
 All lost were his theme in thy glory.

“ They to lay waste peaceful cities went forth—
 Thou bringest them wealth and protection;
 Wonder not, king, that the safe, happy north,
 To thee turns with reverent affection!”

Upon which an unmerciful critic was immediately ready with the following reply, in the “ *Literary News* ” of Stockholm :

“ If Maro, the great one, who sung such a lay
 No critic e’er ventured to bother,
 Had met this queer bard in a hand-to-hand fray,
 He’d have smitten the brow of his brother,
 For giving his fame to another !”

CHAPTER XVII.

TWO KINGS’-DAYS.

EARLY one fine summer morning, there was life and motion in the little town of Wasa, away in East Bothnia. A message had arrived in the night, that his royal majesty was expected there early in the afternoon.

Prefect Piper, who, as in duty bound, went to meet the sire of the realm at the border of the province, did not neglect to send by the messenger a further command as to how the town ought to be in the best order for the worthy reception of the high-born traveler. Everything which had been put off until this last hour was therefore to be trimmed up in haste, polished, and decorated in the most elegant style. A triumphal arch was erected at the gate, and all the young girls of the city were eagerly engaged in ornamenting it with

flowers and leaves. All the gardens were robbed of their new-blown roses, and all the meadows had been obliged to give up their blue-bells, maiden-pinks and St. John's flowers. Birches and mountain-ash trees had been levied upon for their leaves, and juniper was strewn from the gate far out toward the road, but inside the gate poppy leaves were spread. The triumphal arch, besides its other finery, flaunted with garlands of lycopodium, and was ornamented with the royal monogram, beneath which were the arms of the town of Wasa. Korsholm, the residence of the prefect, was newly painted, and as coquettish as one could ask of a four or five-hundred-year-old beauty. The equally ancient church was dusted, scoured, and strewn with leaves, and the large chandeliers were bright as the sun. The school, ordinarily closed in the middle of the summer, was with all diligence furnished by the pupils of the town. Even the new "mineral well," which two years before had begun to come into use, had received a magnificent canopy, and visitors at the well had procured an elegant silver beaker to invite his majesty to taste the rare beverage. In short, all Wasa, with its one thousand two hundred and twenty-two inhabitants at that time, was in the greatest commotion and most remarkable expectation. Nothing was thought of, nothing was spoken of, but the king. Already the country people, in great crowds, began to pour into town and flock together at the south gate. All carried spatter-dashes in their hands, as on great holidays, ready to put them on in honor of the father of the land. The gentlemen of the villages all wore cock's feathers in their caps, the peasant girls wore wreaths of blue-bottle. The old men had scraped off their beards with case knives, and here and there a wealthy peasant woman had aroused the envy of the rest with an elegantly trimmed dress-cap, which had then lately begun to come into fashion, and was such an unprecedented luxury that the clergymen

not infrequently made these caps the theme of sermons of sharp reproof.

Only one house in all Wasa seemed not to take part in the general arrangements; and for the reason that, in a certain sense, the one king was just as good as the other.

Lars Larsson, the old representative, commonly called "the burgher king," to-day completed his eighty-sixth year. His birthday had always been celebrated with much ceremony by the numerous family. The burgomaster of the town, accompanied by his aldermen, had rarely neglected, on such an occasion, to present his congratulations to the highly esteemed man, and even the prefect had not regarded it beneath his dignity sometimes to unite his felicitation to that of the authorities of the town. Thus year by year had birthday after birthday softly gathered on the old mans' whitening head, about as ring after ring is slipped forward on the Russian reckoning board, till the number is full. Larsson had seen both good and evil times, had tasted poverty and riches, sorrow and joy, honor and humiliation; but he had borne the shifting scenes of life with dignity and strength, and therefore no one had been able to deny him his respect, even during his most wretched days when poverty seemed to be the lot of his remaining life. Now, however, if not so rich as many imagined, he was in all respects the foremost merchant of his region, in wealth, experience and public repute; and his eighty-sixth birthday would thus have been by no means a less important event than previous ones had been to the town of Wasa, if it had not chanced to occur on the very day when the majesty of the realm must needs throw the burgher majesty into the shade.

The Larsson house could thus not expect to be remembered by the dignitaries of the place to-day, or even any one except the family; but, for the family itself, this day was more than usually significant.

Its old progenitor, who, although he had passed the most of the business over to his eldest son, yet always continued with stern patriarchal authority to be the chief of the tribe, had felt years weighing upon his head, and thought that this was probably his last birthday. He had therefore, as early as in the spring, announced his wish to see on that day, the 18th of July, all the members of that widely scattered family, great and small, none excepted, gathered around him in Wasa. His wish was a command which no one desired or ventured to disregard. The love of kindred was then a much firmer bond than in our days. A relative in the fourth and fifth degree remove of kinship, was then regarded still to have full claim on the sanctity of consanguinity, though now-a-days hardly cousins in the third degree remember each other. But besides the fact that the Larssons all regarded themselves as closely associated shoots from the same trunk, the rumor was current among the more remote relations that the burgher king wished to celebrate this birthday of his with a will, of which crumbs might fall a good distance from the rich family tree, if one only did not, by his absence, offend the old man,—a reason which we have also seen appealed to in that summons which Eric Ljung, at Hammarby, received from his mother in Munsala.

Several days before the time, the family had been gathered from different points, and now in the hurry concerning the king all stood prepared to present their congratulations.

It was four o'clock in the morning, that good old time at which people in the Larsson house arose. The large room was scoured, and decorated with leaves; it lay in the middle of the old-time dwelling-house to which Larsson had removed after his circumstances had again become improved, and after his worst competitor, his son-in-law, Alderman Blöm, had chanced to leave the shores of time before the father-in-law.

Just opposite the entrance and above the place of honor, still hung, as in former times, the portrait of Charles XII, and it was now, as upon all festive occasions, garlanded with flowers. That great name continued to cast an after-glow over all the eighteenth century, and even beyond.

Notwithstanding the room was the largest single room in Wasa, and although no one but the kindred was present so early in the morning, it was very nearly full of people. The number exceeded eighty persons—men, women, and children—all with claims of near kinship to the ancestor of the family.

The burgher-king had had three sons—Lars, Mathias, and Bertel. The eldest son, Lars, who had lost one of his eyes in the Norse campaign, and was now head of the trading-house, was himself a gray-haired man of fifty-seven years, and father of a numerous family of four sons, five daughters, and five or six grandchildren. The son of the house next in order, Mathias, the farmer in Storkyro, was dead, but had left behind him a wife and six girls, who were now present, two of them with their husbands and children.

The third son, Bertel, was found among the number of the living, and in the most desirable prosperity. He was the only one of the brothers who had studied; he was a clergyman, forty-six years old, the pastor at L——, and made his appearance, large and corpulent, with no less than nine boys, of whom the two eldest had lately been admitted to the university.

Further than these, the senior Larsson had three daughters, Kaisa, Veronica, and Esther. The two elder sisters were dead. Veronica had never married; but Kaisa had been married to Alderman Blöm, and had left behind three young Blöms, who did not neglect to present themselves here in expectation of the will.

Besides these, the representative had had three

brothers and four sisters. These, however, had all disappeared from the earth, and the greater number of their descendants also; but about fifteen or twenty of the latter were present here. Among them was Marie Larsson, from Munsala, widow of Elias Pehrson, with six children, among whom was our young friend the preparatory student, Eric, with the assumed surname Ljung.

Marie Larsson was now nearly fifty years of age, but still bore a trace of that uncommon beauty which in her youth had drawn upon her so many persecutions. When one saw her beside Esther Larsson, summer and autumn were seen side by side, and over both a touch of sadness; but that sadness was prepossessing and beautiful. And Esther Larsson was no longer young—no longer the rash, wild girl who rode at the ramparts of Korsholm or lost her garter in Lillkyro forest; neither was she the capricious, daring girl, who threw herself out of the window in Stockholm; nor the over-wept and desperate girl who fought against fate at Falkby farm;—for she would soon complete her twenty-ninth year. But she was as fresh and blooming in her outer form as though she had scarcely yet beheld her twentieth. Traces of the heart's hard battles, which she had fought through with so much renunciation, showed themselves only in the deep seriousness of the beautiful eyes, and in a touch about the lips which reminded one of the father's firm and energetic character. Esther Larsson had never been a perfect beauty, like her cousin Marie, but many had observed a strong family resemblance between the two. Notwithstanding the twenty years difference in their ages, this resemblance, as they now stood beside each other, was instantly apparent. Both had in their general appearance something of the East Bothnian woman's resolute bearing—Swedish energy, Finnish resignation. Both were intelligent women, both bore

ineffaceable features of refinement and agreeableness, acquired in intercourse with higher classes of society, and visibly contrasting with their present surroundings. But while Marie Larsson (for thus we still continue to call her) was built of weaker timber, and seemed more formed to love and suffer, Esther's whole demeanor evinced a strong soul, unbroken by adversity—a soul compounded of powerful passions, of the deepest, most ineffaceable impressions, but also of an unconquerable will to control them, and of a tried resolution to triumph over herself.

Thus had the changes of life molded these women, whom we have seen in the first, the sweetest budding of their youth and their love, and who now remained at a later age bereft of their dearest hope, but both firmly rooted in the fear of God and the peace of conscience. They were now met for the first time in several years, and exchanged a few words while they were waiting for the old representative, who still tarried in his chamber in the early morning hour.

CHAPTER XVIII.

KING DAVID'S EIGHTEENTH PSALM.

MARIE LARSSON led her children forward to Esther.

“Here is my eldest son, Elias, twenty-four years old, bookkeeper at Keppo's saw-mill. He resembles his father.”

Young Elias made a bow, stiff as a saw-log of ten inches thickness at the top.

“Here,” continued Marie, “are my four girls—Maria, Sigrid, Veronica, and Esther, the last eight years old. She looks like you, so she has your name.”

The girls courtesied so that their short, red-striped holiday dresses swept the juniper twigs into circles on the floor. All were uncommonly pretty children, but Sigrid, the second in order, promised some day not to yield precedence to her mother in beauty.

“And here,” continued the mother, with a pardonable pride, as she led forward her blooming younger boy; “here is my son Eric, whom I have just got back from Sweden.”

Eric, with his head still full of royalty, made a bow which savored not at all of saw-logs, but, instead, called forth a kind smile on the lips of Esther Larsson. She kissed all the girls, put her hand under Eric’s chin, straightened his head higher, and said: “Look up! you who have your mother’s gentle eyes, and your father’s resolute forehead! Where in the world did you learn to bow so elegantly? One might think you had been at court.”

“That is not so bad a guess,” said his mother, with a smile, perhaps with a little, very little temptation to vanity over Eric’s distinguished acquaintances, although she herself had not had much pleasure from her high-born admirers.

“At court?” repeated Esther, with surprise.

“I have been living with Count Bertelsköld, at Drottningholm,” answered Eric, embarrassed.

Both his feminine friends blushed, but from unlike reasons. Marie Larsson was thinking of that Bertelsköld who was once so near betraying her to dishonor. Esther Larsson was thinking of that other, whose image was so ineffaceably hidden in the depth of her heart.

“He asked a great deal about aunt, and said that aunt and he had been old acquaintances,” continued Eric, utterly ignorant as to what a tempest of emotions he awoke to life with these words.

Esther Larsson turned away to conceal the flood of

purple which suffused her whole face. Marie mutely pressed her hand. Marie alone knew how to look into the depth of Esther's soul. She alone had Esther's confidence.

"I believed you strong enough to forget!" she whispered.

"Oh, I have fought remembrance to the very death!" whispered Esther in return; "but this is more than a wrong, it is a mockery!"

It should be stated that Esther had for the last ten years—ever since Bertelsköld had ceased to write to her, and she one bitter day had heard of his marriage—purposely avoided all questions, all intelligence as to his later fate; and so widely did the sea separate the two countries, that Esther was to this day ignorant of the fact that the count's marriage had already, for three years, been dissolved by death.

Fortunately for her confusion, the door of another room at that moment opened, and the burgher-king came out.

The strong, proud man had greatly changed in the twelve or thirteen years since we last saw him. His back, once so inflexible and erect, was bowed under the burden of years; his hair had become snow-white, his sun-burned complexion had become yellow and wrinkled, his steps were tottering, and his bony hand rested on a massive cane. Still, when he greeted the numerous family gathered, and, without depending on the support of any one else, went to take his place in the seat of honor, which was decorated with leaves and garlands, there was much left of his former resolute, authoritative bearing, and steady look.

Lars Larsson, the younger, now, with a loud voice, began a psalm, in which all joined. It was one of the old man's favorite psalms, No. 303, the hymn of the three men in the fire. Year after year, in evil times and good, on this day this same psalm had been sung by children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren in

Larsson's house ; and now, too, sounded from the lips of old and young the same mighty " Praised be the Lord, our fathers' God ! "

When they came to the refrain, " Praise and magnify God, who judgeth righteously and forgetteth not the faithful ! " the old man's voice joined in the psalm, and continued thus through all the eleven verses to its close. After this, all the relatives came forward, and were called by name (for many of the growing ones saw the old man now for the first time, and the names of others he had forgotten), and, one at a time, presented their congratulations. For all of them the white-haired old man had a friendly question or an encouraging word. That inflexible, austere, often severe burgher-king, had never been seen so mild ; and from this many secretly prophesied that his days would soon be numbered.

This was the extent of that ceremony. After its close, the children were treated with raisins and ginger-cakes, but the older ones with coffee, which, since the time of King Frederick, had begun to be common enough in the Swedish towns, but was still so costly and rare in Finland that it was only used in wealthy houses and on festive occasions. Both coffee and raisins were enjoyed during a ceremonious silence, interrupted only by low whispers ; for so strong was the respect for the chief of the family that, so long as he sat in the place of honor, no one, unquestioned, ventured to open his mouth.

After awhile, the old man beckoned to " the light of his eyes, " which was Esther, in a double sense, and bade her read aloud King David's eighteenth psalm. She sat down by her father's side, opened the large Bible of Charles XII, and with clear, tuneful voice, read :

" I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer ; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust ;

my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. * * * Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved, and were shaken, because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. * * * He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me. They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the Lord was my stay. He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me. * * * For Thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness. * * * The Lord liveth; and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted!"

"My children," continued the old man, in the spirit of the psalm, after his daughter had closed; "my dear children, while we are gathered here around the Holy Book, our fortress and our rock, I wish, before I am separated from you, to be a living witness of the truth of God's word. Look at me, as I sit, old and gray, among my posterity. All my long life is, in the eye of the Lord, as a vapor that is driven before the tempest, and its place shall soon be found no more among the living. But wonderful to me is the way of the world, and I can well say with King David, that the Lord has drawn me out of great waters, darkness and earthquake, and delivered me from many enemies who were too strong for me. In the reigns of five kings I have lived, and beheld weal and woe to all the kingdom of Sweden, particularly our Finnish land. When I was a

child, many mighty lords ruled with great pomp over the poverty of the people, and I learned from the cradle that no good comes from government by an aristocracy. I grew to be a youth, and there came a mighty prince, under whom it was well with the land. I became a man, and saw the welfare of the kingdom die with the eleventh Charles. Then came bitter years of hunger, when the fields were black as death—when half our people withered away like leaves of autumn, while those who remained wandered around like ghosts, and mothers ate their dead children. No one then believed that so distressful a time was ever again to come, but the Lord well knew how still to heap the measure. Not long after the famine, came the pestilence into the land, and after the pestilence, war swept over all the country of Finland, with slaughter and desolation. I was then a man in my prime, and it was not for me to weep womanish tears ; but God preserve you, my dear children, from ever beholding so grievous a sight ! For then verily the earth trembled, and the foundations of the mountains were moved before the anger of the Lord, and fire proceeded out of his mouth, and there was darkness under his feet. But behold ! out of that thick, quaking darkness, when there were many more wild beasts than human beings, when the abomination of desolation stood in holy places, and all our land was a wilderness and seemed consumed for all time under the devouring fire of God the Almighty, then did He help us also out of this our great distress, and send us, at last, peace above all our sorrow. I saw the great King Charles go forth, a beardless boy ; I heard the ends of the earth echoing with his renown. I saw him return, a poor fugitive, to that kingdom which had poured out its blood for his sake. I, like many thousand others, through him, lost all that I possessed ; and yet even to-day I cannot, as he looks upon me here from his picture on the wall, say aught else of him than ‘ God bless the honest heart under his blue coat ! ’ ”

Here his voice trembled, and the old man was silent some moments · but soon, with a steady tone, he again continued :

“ Well, I have heard the rats gnawing the monument over his grave ; and, as a merchant, I can well say that we went away from it poor in goods, but what we gained was the sight of God’s hand above us, both in wrath and mercy. My children, this land, which has borne such burdens and has not sunk, cannot be utterly destroyed by human hand. This people, which has lived through such times and again risen, cannot, by any power in this world, be erased from the number of the living. Though the mountains fall upon us, and our pavilion be ‘dark waters and thick clouds of the skies,’ yet shall the Lord take us thence, and bring us ‘forth into a large place,’ for He delighteth in this people, and He shall make our darkness light.

“ Afterwards I became an old man, and then I saw crowns and powers—saw our whole land, for the second time, in hostile hands—saw the many lords again rule, although they ruled in the name of the people. Of myself I will not speak much. I have been so poor that I had not a stone on which to lay my head, and yet hath the Lord again blessed me, His humble servant, with goods and possessions. I have had so many enemies and slanderers that I have fled from house and home ; so lonely and forsaken, that I never expected to see any loving eye again ; and yet hath God spared me, unworthy sinner, until this day, when I see my family flourish like a vine of the valley, and behold around me this whole room full of blood-kinsmen and posterity unto the third and fourth generation. The Lord liveth ! Blessed be my rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted ! ”

CHAPTER XIX.

THE FAMILY ALLIANCE.

“ONE thing, however, I wish to impress upon you,” continued the old man, “and that is (next to the beginning of all wisdom) the doctrine of the fathers, which has come down through our whole race. In my great-grandfather’s time there lived in Storkyro a man by the name of Aaron Bertila, who had been a king among peasants and was therefore called the ‘peasant king.’ This Aaron Bertila had been one of the leaders of the peasants in the Club War, and his whole life was an uninterrupted battle for the people and against that power which places itself between the king and the people, and which to-day governs the kingdom of Sweden—the nobility. From this trunk the Lord permitted two branches to grow. Bertila had an only daughter, and from her descended the counts Bertelsköld, who at all times have belonged to those who defy the king while they trample on the people. Bertila had no son, but he adopted my grandfather, gave him, with his blessing, goods and farm, and” (here Larsson took down an old ax, with an oaken helve, which was on the wall) “gave him this ax.”

All crowded nearer to look at the inherited family treasure, and the old man continued :

“Yes, look at this ax, my children; it does no harm; in it there is no witchcraft. It is merely a laborer’s ax, and indicates nothing but the honor of labor. You may know that the aristocratic branch of the peasant king’s family has inherited a copper ring, with pagan and popish witchcraft, and it brings temporal pros-

perity, but eternal ruin. The ax brings no temptation of the devil; from it come industry and contentment of mind, daily bread, the fear of the Lord, and good conscience, both in evil times and good. This, my children, is our share of the inheritance. And behold! the fear of the Lord has blessed our work, blessed our family, so that in us is fulfilled the wisdom of Solomon, v, 1: 'The righteous man stands in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labors.'

"Will you stand fast to it all the days of your lives?"

"Yes," replied men and women in the crowded room.

"Will you stand fast, not only to the fear of the Lord, to industry and contentment, but also to the freedom of the people and the rights of the king against nobility and gentry as the custom has been in East Bothnia of old?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"Will you, children," continued the old man, solemnly, "promise and swear, as your fathers and mothers have sworn, to fear God, honor the king, work for your people, and live and die for their freedom?"

"Yes," replied the children, with trembling voices, for they were frightened by the terrible seriousness of those words, of which they only understood that it was something about the king. Eric Ljung alone, who had hitherto kept silence, as he stood on the boundary between youth and manhood, pronounced his "yes" with brave voice.

"Then I take God, who hears us, to witness, on your promise for this and coming times," continued the old man, as he stretched forth his hands in blessing above the assembled throng. "And now that you have promised this, in the presence of God the Almighty, I have only to add: 'Lord, now let Thou Thy ser-

vant depart in peace,' for I now know that, though all else fail, this family will not depart from Thy honor and the cause of the people. My dear children, receive now my blessing before I go away from you. God, the Most High, grant that you may be increased and multiplied in all good things ! May he grant that you may bloom like lilies by the water-brooks, and with you, all our land, that it may be harmonious, free and happy, in law and justice, under the shelter of the Most High, until the end of time. Praised be His holy name !”

“Amen !” said a voice, and when all looked around, a square-built, strong-limbed peasant, about fifty years of age, was standing at the door.

The countenance of the burgher king darkened. He recognized his brother's son Benjamin, formerly called Istvan, the same who in his childhood had been carried away by the Cossacks, and afterwards, after many changes and adventures, had come to claim from his uncle his large inheritance, the Bertila family seat in Storkyro parish. This had given rise to a litigation of many years, which had been made use of by Larsson's political enemies to ruin him completely. The evil project had indeed not altogether succeeded, but the burgher king could not forget that he had finally lost in the highest court, and had been obliged to resign the estate. The two parties, by turns plaintiff and defendant, had continued up to this time litigating about house dilapidation, new improvements, and other similar matters, since Larsson took the farm upon his hands, after its having run to decay during the great war. From all this had arisen a bitter enmity between the nephew and the whole family of the uncle ; they had not spoken to each other when they happened to meet in Wasa, and Benjamin Bertila was the only one of the numerous family who had not been invited to celebrate the birthday. He now stood, uninvited, on the threshold of that hostile house, and all awaited

with wonder and surprise the issue of this meeting. For awhile old Larsson kept silence, and seemed to be battling against his rebellious feelings. Then his daughter Esther leaned to him and softly whispered, "Father, you have asked a promise of us ; now God has asked one of you !"

Larsson was silent still. But his strong will at last gained the mastery over the evil passion, and in a voice whose trembling, in echo of his inner conflict, was hardly perceptible, he was heard to ask :

"Does the son of my brother Thomas come hither as an enemy, or does he come in the power of God, with the olive branch of peace ?"

"I have said amen to your words, Fathers Lars, and indeed I am the man to say it once more, if you like," replied the peasant, in a straightforward tone, as he stepped a few paces inside the door.

"Then come and reach me your hand, and let everything be forgotten," said Larsson.

Juryman Bertila—he had lately been clothed with that dignity—instantly tramped with brisk steps through the middle of the crowd, seized his uncle's hand in his fist, and squeezed it in a way that might have crushed a hand less hard. "God's peace, dear father!" said he, in his brusque, open-hearted manner. "God give you health, and let us live to see the day when Fiscal Spolin dangles from the gallows. It is said to be not far off, for he has been shut up now for passing counterfeit money. You are to know, dear father, that he is the one who got up the whole quarrel."

"Let us say no more about it," said Larsson, as he shook the proffered hand. "We all have unpaid bills to our Lord ; we may look to how we recover them on the great day of accounts. It would be a shame to the Larssons, if they should live at variance and in mutual strife, like the other branch of Aaron Bertila's family. Benjamin," continued the old man, "you have taken the first step. You shall not have reached

the hand to your old uncle in vain. I intended to-day to appeal to the king with our cause; but it is as well not to do so. Between us shall be friendship, and no angry purpose hereafter. My son Lars, my son Bertel, I lay that upon your consciences when I am no more. And as a pledge that all three branches of the Larsson family—clergy, burghers, and peasants—henceforth enter into a faithful compact with each other for all time, Benjamin, who calls himself Bertila, shall keep our progenitor's ax. Here it is; take it with you, and the one of our race who hereafter lifts a hand against the others—cut off that hand, cut it off with Aaron Bertila's ax! It belongs to the farm; and you, who are the elder brother's only surviving son, are the rightful heir. Take good care of it, I charge you, and remember its meaning, for on that depends the fortune of the family."

Benjamin Bertila, otherwise known in his village under the name of Penna, balanced the ax in his rough hand, examined the still sharp edge, and with embarrassment expressed the opinion that "Father might just as well keep it—there were axes enough at Bertila."

The burgher king frowned. He was not wont to tolerate contradiction, and said:

"When Elisha, the man of God, came to Jordan, and saw a workman who had dropped his ax in the water, and no one was able to draw it thence, Elisha threw a stick into the water and the ax floated. Behold, that workman is our race, the peasant is the blade, the merchant is the helve, and the clergyman is Elisha, who throws into the water the wood of the cross. And even though this ax should fall into the deepest well, it shall float again, for the sake of that wood which is thrown thither after it. Mark that, Benjamin, and, my children, all of you. Do you want to keep the inheritance of the peasant king?"

“ I will hang it above my bed, father, and remember what you have said,” replied Penna.

At that moment the old man seemed to recollect something, and in his shrewd head, which was continually filled with speculations of trade, quick as lightning awoke a new plan for the future, which should secure the welfare of the race.

“ Why do you remain unmarried, Benjamin,” said he, “ until the vigor of your veins decays? It is not good for man to be alone, and, without a housewife, ill-tended is so rich an estate as Bertila farm.”

Penna, embarrassed, scratched his head, and replied that he had not happened to think of it as long as he possessed nothing, and now it was too late.

“ But, without a son, without children, for whom shall you struggle and work? ” continued the old man, kindly. “ Who shall inherit your estate, when, by and by, you close your eyes? Of course you understand that heirs will not be wanting—they stand here, the whole room full. It is your blood, Benjamin, but still it is thinner than your own; it is colder than own children’s blood, my son! You must secure a wife, the sooner the better; is there some capable woman, neither too young nor too old, in your village, who could attend to Bertila farm? ”

Penna replied that he had not had time to inquire as to that; he had had enough to do to procure good horses and cows.

“ Then I will give you a good wife,” said the uncle, “ a wife who might be a godsend for far better fellows than you, Benjamin, and who is able to make Bertila a very paradise of the Lord. I will give you a new pledge of reconciliation and friendship, for all time; the best, indeed, that one man can give another, for everything that your old uncle possesses is nothing to this, his most precious treasure. Here, Benjamin Bertila, son of my dear brother Thomas, I will give you my daughter Esther to wife.”

A deep silence pervaded the room. Only from Esther Larsson's lips escaped a subdued exclamation of surprise.

"My father! Of what are you thinking?" she whispered, scarcely audibly, while she crimsoned with anger.

CHAPTER XX.

THREE SUITORS.

SCARCELY less surprised than his proposed bride, the honest Penna repeatedly laid hold of his long foretop in search of a reply to the uncle's unexpected and flattering offer, when at that moment a messenger, arrived with orders to two of the young Larssons, who belonged to the cavalry of the city, to present themselves immediately for exercise at Korsholm. The guests of the Larsson house believed nothing else than that the king was approaching. There was a stir among the assembled throng, but none ventured to withdraw until the burgher-king thought best to dismiss the gathering. This occurrence rescued Esther from the embarrassment of open mutiny against her despotic father and giving her cousin the mitten.

The city prided itself at that time in both cavalry and infantry, and between these two bodies of troops there was a noble competition in military exercises. The cavaliers were unwearied in drilling their sober work-horses to a suitably imposing bearing, teaching them to keep in line, and to pace to the time of the pipers and drummers; but they especially did all that lay in human power that the cavalry should not, on a sudden, run away back to Larsson's or Bladhun's

or Blöm's farm, or run off into the gate of some inviting alehouse, where the horses had been daily customers. The infantry, on their part, puffed pitifully in the summer heat, under the burden of their muskets, and had an innate difficulty in distinguishing right from left, or lifting their stiff legs as high as was required to show their loyal ardor. All, however, felt valiant of heart in their span-new uniforms, which, on account of that great day, had cost the tailors an incredible amount of pains, and which all the girls in town admired as the perfection of military elegance. If anything disturbed the joy of the day, it was perhaps a trifle of jealousy between the cavalry and infantry, as each threw at the other an occasional sarcasm in passing; but that signified nothing. At that time, the Wasa boys had not yet gained a name in epic poetry; but had occasion required, it is very possible that the boys of that time too, in spite of their restive horses and stiff legs, would have done honor to the name.

Esther Larsson had made use of the occasion to escape her father's courtship on her behalf. She had gone with the rest to the ramparts of Korsholm, and, with her thoughts on wholly different matters, was standing an indifferent spectator of that remarkable exercise, when a hoarse, discordant voice close beside her said: "Fine weather to-day, Miss Larsson!"

Esther turned around and recognized Captain Neptunus Gast, equipped for the occasion in an enormous frill, and with flowers in his hat, and other indications of extreme elegance, which gave him a resemblance to a befringed bowsprit. The captain was her abomination, but in his present rig he was so ludicrous that Esther burst out in a laugh, which she did not in the least trouble herself to conceal.

Captain Gast took this for a proof that he had made an agreeable impression, and, quite contrary to his laconic habit, and without waiting for reply, continued:

“Block of my tackle! What an idea the king will have of Wasa to-day!”

“Yes, especially when he gets to see Gast,” replied Esther, turning away.

The captain advanced a step nearer, and in the same tone continued:

“If he only doesn’t get yourself in the spyglass. Why, you’re as fine as a new-painted galleon.”

“That is on account of father’s birthday, if you must needs know,” replied Esther, without looking around.

“Father?” continued her persecutor. “Do you know, my reddest rosebud, that I have been lying in eddy-water after you ever since I came home, and that I have the very yellowest gold for you from Stockholm? You shall be strung with flags from deck to topgallant-mast, if you will only say a single yes.”

“What now?” responded Esther, indignantly. “Have I not told you, Gast, that you must never prate such foolishness?”

“If I should remember all the chatter of the misses, I should surely have feathers and down enough to load my boat. If you don’t want me, your compass points wrong, miss, and the stream doesn’t set out of the course to me on account of it. I shall have you, for all that—it is already written in the log-book. I am clear for sailing now, and I’m going to steer straight for father to propose.”

“You might as well steer for stocks and stones, as you did at Sandhamn!” replied Esther, disdainfully. “Before you should have me, Gast”

She was interrupted. One of the cavalry horses, unused to the spurs, had thrown its rider, and came running across the field directly toward them.

“Say, what shall I do to please you, in order to get you? I can do anything!” protested the conceited suitor.

“Mount the horse which is coming this way, ride

home to father, ask for my red neck-cloth, and be back within ten minutes," said Esther, jestingly.

Esther very well knew that the old aforetime drunkard had never, during his many adventures, periled so brave an attempt as to climb upon the back of a horse. Notwithstanding that, the captain was instantly ready, caught the horse by the hanging reins, and pulled back till he got it to stop.

"Stop! you will break your neck!" exclaimed Esther, repenting her inconsiderateness. "A sailor on horseback is an abomination in the sight of Heaven!"

But Captain Gast had already climbed into the saddle, about as he would have climbed up to a top-yard. Before any one made a motion to prevent him, he sped off at full speed, hanging like a bag across the horse's back, face downwards over the pommel of the saddle, with both hands clinging fast in the horse's mane.

Shouts and laughter were heard from the spectators on the field. "Now he is going where he will have to go some time any way!" exclaimed some, for the belief was general that Captain Gast had sold himself to the evil one.

"It will be seen that the one who helped him sail in a contrary wind straight across the reefs of Wago, will help him whole-skinned off the horse's back too!" cried another.

Esther shuddered. She shared the superstition of the time, and it seemed to her as though in her temerity she had defied the evil powers, and bound herself, with a precipitate promise, to a man whose very name was her horror. "Run, Eric, run!" she whispered to the student, who was standing beside her. "Hurry home to our house, and say, for God's sake, that no one must give Gast my red neck-cloth!"

Eric bounded away.

At that moment a noise arose, which extended from the south gate to the ramparts of Korsholm. "The king is coming! The king is coming!" sounded from all lips.

A carriage rolled into the town. It was that of the prefect, who came back in advance, in order to receive his majesty at the gates of the residence. At his side sat a noble gentleman of stately appearance. The people took it for granted that he was the father of the country in person, and began to huzza! The prefect saluted and bowed, and his companion saluted and bowed also. The people huzzaed the more, thronged in the road, so that the carriage was obliged to stop, and began to unhitch the horses in order to draw it to the residence.

Esther Larsson was carried away by the stream, and stood only a few steps from the carriage. In vain did the prefect shout that it was a mistake, and that his majesty would not arrive until toward evening. They did not hear him, the foamy horses were unhitched, the multitude was wild with enthusiasm, and a hundred arms at once were extended to grasp the carriage. All this took place within a few minutes. No one observed that Esther Larsson had sunk down powerless on a pile of timber which lay by the side of the street.

Then the strange gentleman sprang out of the carriage, made his way through the crowd, shoved aside some robust sailors, who persisted in trying to lift him upon their shoulders and, in an instant was standing beside the swooning girl.

"Courage, Esther!" he hastily whispered; "from this day naught but death shall divide us!"

She heard every word, and it went like a dagger-thrust through her heart; but she was unable to reply. Neither was there time for that, for the crowd pressed on, the prefect took the arm of his companion, and thus the two passed along (the people having become

enlightened as to their mistake) undisturbed, although earnestly stared at, to Korsholm.

Not until then did Esther regain strength and the power of reflection.

She had again seen him for whom she had so long suffered, alone with her grief, deceived, forgotten and cast off. She had recognized Count Charles Victor Bertelsköld. It was himself—how well she remembered his beautiful, gentle blue eyes—those eyes which could be so false! She had heard his once beloved voice! O! those lips which could so well lie an eternal love! And he had bidden her take courage—he had said that now only death could part them—he who had disappointed her, and was long ago bound to another wife! Was it mockery? was it dissimulation? She did not know, but both seemed to her equally crushing. Whatever it was, it was nevertheless a cruelty without equal, and she felt those words, once more pronounced without compassion, must be her death.

She was about to hurry home, but in her way now stood Captain Gast, triumphantly swinging her red cloth.

“Here is the cloth, little miss,” he exclaimed; “and I take all standing here to witness that it was a quarter-past ten o’clock when I rode away, and still wanted seven minutes of the half when I came back here with the colors. Eight minutes, little miss, and it was ten that I had leave to sail on the cruise. I have had fair wind, as you see, there and back—that is a way I have. Now you have taken the pay, and signed the contract. Block in my tackle, boys! Miss Larsson is my heart’s love now! Next Sunday the ban shall be read, all three times at once—that is written in the law, for you see the Hope is cleared for sailing, and I am going to take you with me.”

Esther did not condescend to answer, although these words filled her with new horror. Eric Ljung,

who had arrived too late, and now, flushed with the running, had returned, took her arm, and thrust the captain aside.

“Down with the helm, land-lubber,” yelled the evil spirit of the sea; “and don’t you dare to take my rosebud from me, or the devil take you! No one hails me to windward without getting a heavy sea over his bow!”

With these words he again pressed forward to seize his prey. Eric was not slow to knock him so roughly in the breast that he tumbled back; but at the same moment the boy felt a stinging pain in his right arm, like that with which the electric eel is said to stun any one who touches it, and instantly the arm hung powerless at his side.

“Be content with that for the present! I will be sure to come again and woo,” muttered Captain Gast.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE BETROTHAL.

WHILE loyal Wasa was shouting acclaim to her supposed king, Representative Larsson had gone back to his own room and rested an hour, for he was old, and the protracted solemn talking had worn upon him. Nature demanded her due, even of this powerful man, whom nothing seemed to be able to break. He did not like to show his increasing feebleness in the presence of others, and no one knew how weary and exhausted he lay on that plain, hard bed. The only one who in that and in all else had his full confidence, his daughter Esther, frightened by the plan of the marriage, had this time, contrary to her custom, left him alone.

This made the old man feverish and bitter. He felt alone and forsaken—he who his whole life through had depended on his own strength and been man enough to bear so many sorrows alone. “O Lord!” sighed he, “take Thy servant hence! His own have abandoned him. An old withered pine is he, fallen by age, in a breezeless forest, and is no more fit for timber in any building in this world. Indifferent around him stand the waxing trees and the strong trunks. He sees the grass growing green, and the flowers bud in the valley; but moss groweth over his marrow, and he lieth, dried up, with withered branches, like a windfall in the path of men.”

Just then the door opened softly, and his daughter entered. She was pale and exhausted with weeping, but the old man did not see that. He was a selfish man; he had at all times had eyes and ears for his own righteousness, his own firm, upright will, his own sorrows and difficulties, and how nobly he had thought, and how well he had worked for his country, his kinsmen and his children; in the secret mirror of the heart, however, all these had always most plainly shown him his own image in the center.

“How is father?” gently inquired Esther—she who now lived only for the happiness of others.

“Worn out—useless—forgotten, like an old work-horse, that is good for nothing but to be knocked in the head, so as not to require fodder and stable-room any longer,” peevishly replied the father.

“I thought it would do you good to see how all honor you and have gathered here on your birthday,” said the daughter.

“Honor me? yes, in order to be one of the number that is to get a rag of the inheritance. But in that they will overreach themselves. There is no more here than Lars needs—and you, girl. You run away from your old father while he is thinking of you.”

“Forgive me, father! I was so frightened—so troubled on account of what you had just said.”

“Lars needs stock for the grain trade,” continued the old man, without heeding her answer. “Without money he cannot stir, and the balance shows that we have gone back again in profits. The Hope alone sails in stocks; Gast, and no one else, lays gold. But the more the Hope earns the more flows out at other points. The other scoops suffer loss upon loss—the tar falls, the grain falls, the butter falls, and we lose on the peasants. I tell you, Esther, it will not do in this case to divide the inheritance. All that I possess I have myself earned; I will give it to whom I choose. Lars is to have it; my will lies there in the iron chest. Bertel has a pastorate—he can take care of himself; and you, Esther, shall have a liberal portion, because you have been watchful of your old father. For the rest, you will have to take care of yourself, too, child, and I therefore wish to see you provided for at last. You are an old maid; it is time for you to get a good husband.”

“I am satisfied with my father’s choice,” humbly replied Esther. An hour, or rather a few words, had changed her whole mind. That which had lately seemed a misfortune to her had now become a deliverance.

“That is well,” said the father, as though anything else could never come in question. “Call Benjamin; I want to make up my account with this world, and have not time to dally with the balance.”

Penna came.

The old man sat up erect, and scarcely a trace of the feebleness of age was any longer to be seen.

“My son,” said he, with dignity, “we have lived in long enmity, and it has been sinful in the sight of God and man. That, praise God, is now past; and as I know you otherwise to be a capable and just man, I

again ask you the same question: Will you call me father, and take my daughter Esther to wife?"

Penna was of that sort to whom it never occurs to think independently. He looked fixedly at the venerable old man, then at the beautiful blooming woman who was offered him, and, after a moment's deliberation, bravely answered, "Yes."

"Reach him your hand, child," said the old man; "and thus you two are now betrothed. I will give my daughter wearing apparel, linen, a complete outfit for housekeeping, six milch cows, a hundred barrels of salt, and four thousand dollars dower. Are you content with that?"

"Yes," replied Penna. He had, in reality, expected considerably more, but had not courage to answer no.

"Besides this," continued Larsson, "I have deposited in the bank of Hamburg a principal of ten thousand dollars, of which my posterity in direct descent may draw the interest, if they can certify to being in extreme need. But otherwise this principal is to grow, with interest upon interest, till a hundred years after deposit, when it is to be made use of in the manner prescribed in my will. Do you promise that you will not, either as to this point or as to other provisions of the will, raise any objection or quarrel?"

"Yes," replied Penna.

"Then I trust you on a man's word," said the old man. "Be a good husband to your wife, Benjamin; she is a capable woman in all her avocations, and she has a heart like gold. In order that nothing may be concealed between you, I ought to tell you that in her early youth she was near falling into the snares of an aristocratic gentleman."

"My father!" interrupted Esther, upbraidingly.

"I say," continued the old man, without heeding the interruption, "she has been near her fall, and near causing me great sorrow, but, praise God, she has

come out from the trial with honor, and I deliver her to you without stain. So you must never speak an unkind word to her. She has not seen her tempter again, and curses him in her heart."

Esther hid her face in her hands.

"You now know what you ought to know," said Larsson, "and everything is now clear between us. Go now, my son ; God bless you. As to your being cousins, I will procure the king's own permission for the marriage. Next Sunday your bans shall be read in Wasa Church, and two weeks afterward, if I live, the wedding shall take place."

Penna, who had opened his eyes at the beginning of this explanation, seemed contented with the close, and careful to appear like an amiable betrothed. He knew very well, he said, that old father would make everything right. He knew also that Esther was no city puppet, although she had received a little finer education than her future husband, and she should fare well indeed in the new cottage at Bertila. She would be heartily delighted with the twelve fine cows in the cow-house, so fat that they shone, and now there were to be eighteen, and there was a milk-room, with fine new shelves and pans, and then she might drive with Bogga, whose equal was not to be found in all Finland, for Bogga was of Hungarian blood, his sire had been called Bogatir, and she should ride whenever she pleased. Penna, who had been a hussar, liked that. She should not be afraid of the aristocratic gentleman ; he should look out for the old hussar sabre, which had not yet quite rusted in its sheath. Then Penna would tell her all his remarkable youthful adventures on the Hungarian steppes, and about the great prince Eugene, and Well, there would be nothing wanting in their happiness but that Penna should once more come to see his dear old master, Count Bertelsköld, and invite him to the wedding. "What does father-in-law say to that !"

Larsson's gray eyebrows frowned bitterly. "Stupid nonsense!" he replied.

Penna felt hurt. It was not so very stupid, he thought, since the count was the one who had rescued him from captivity among the Turks, and since he had been a good master, whom Penna had served faithfully for eight years.

"Thank God the gentleman is on the other side of the sea, or you would have it in your power to commit a greater blunder than you yourself can comprehend," said Larsson.

"Well," said Penna, undaunted, "if the count says to me, 'Istvan'—for that was my name at that time—'Istvan, there is the sea; jump in, my boy!' you see, father-in-law may depend upon it, I would jump in plump. And if he should say to me, 'Istvan, you can give me Bertila farm, and be my groom again, and tend my Bogatir, for no one else can do it like you, and he understands you when you whistle, and comes flying, even though he is a mile away, as it happened once in Lillkyro forest,—well, father-in-law, then I would answer: 'Take the whole hodge-podge, and me in the bargain! Such a master and such a horse I shall never have again!'"

"But if he should say to you, 'Istvan, give me your wife?'" continued the old man, looking fixedly at him.

Penna took this for sly raillery, winked knowingly, and said: "My master was not one of the worst, but if he should happen to say anything of that kind, does father-in-law know what I would answer him?"

"You would answer, 'For shame!'"

"No, I should load my old horse-pistol with two bullets, hand it to my master, and say to him: 'Here is my wife—take her, but shoot me in the forehead first; then everything will be right as it should be!'"

"That is the faithfulness of a dog, and not of a free man!" roared the old man, exasperated. "And is it

to such a slave that I am to give my daughter! But—never mind! There is one other who has a word to say, and that is your wife, Benjamin! Do you know what she might answer? Well, she might walk between you two, and receive the bullets in her own bosom. Have I understood you, my daughter?"

Esther sorrowfully bowed her head.

"Then I can be safe," responded Larsson. "God willing, it will never go so far as that. Go, my children, and every day pray the Most High to lead you not into temptation."

The betrothed pair departed. "My blood shall not degenerate!" murmured Larsson to himself.

Shortly afterward Captain Neptunus Gast entered the room.

He was adorned and blooming as we just saw him at the parade ground, and a proud self-satisfaction was reflected in his uncouth bearing.

"Father Larsson," he began, with a certain solemnity.

"What's the trouble now?" said the old man, testily. "Is the Hope ready to set sail, and do you want provisions, Gast? Go to my son Lars—he attends to that matter. But don't you defraud the crew again with musty groats, rancid butter, and mouldy bread! Why, Gast, you ought to know that decent fare is needed at sea!"

"Sir representative," began the captain anew.

"What now?" again roared the old burgher king. "When did I become a sir, I would like to know? An honest burgher is still commonly entitled father, and his wife mother."

"The question now is not about the Hope—or more rightly speaking, *my* Hope is ready to set sail," continued the captain, gathering courage. "You have perhaps observed, father, that I have been for some time cruising in dead water after a certain person.

And now I come to court the honorable and virtuous Miss Esther, and ask her of you as my wedded wife, for I am well enough off for it."

"Indeed!" said Larsson, dryly. "Well, then I can answer you just as briefly and well, you can put such fancies out of your mind in less than no time. It does not do for a patched pitch-jacket to be the fool of the girls."

"I say that I have means to afford it," continued the captain, without allowing himself to be daunted. "And, as I know that father Larsson counts on the pennies he can set down on the marking-roll, that I am man enough to buy the Hope, and all his open vessels, with cargo and rigging, and, if you do not believe me, I will show you my bonds and my kegs of Hollandish yellow-birds. They jingle a trifle better than your coin, father Larsson, so I shout, Brig ahoy!"

"Shout at sea, but shout moderately in here. It is not worth while to waste powder on sick folks. My daughter is betrothed to-day, and Benjamin Bertila is to be her husband."

"Tackle and block! Drive that dog out-doors before you repent, father! I am the one who mustered the girl in. She will take pay of me!"

"Fellow! Do you know to whom you are speaking?"

"Yes, to one who has me to thank for everything which he now has control of, and who, without me, would be poorer than a ship rat within a year. Write in the marking roll, father Larsson, that all your prosperity hangs upon me. Without me, everything would go wrong end first for you. But in my hand there is fortune, and I can make you still seven-fold richer than you are."

In all this there was some truth, which made the old man meditative, and caused his flaming anger to

die down in coals. He did not retract, but he thought best not to kill the goose which laid his golden eggs. So without allowing his impudent servant to observe his change of base, he continued :

“Heaven rules over fortune and misfortune, and I advise you, Gast, to take care of your loose mouth. You cannot mislead me with your boasting; but you may draw the fiscal upon you, for simple folk say that you have sworn yourself into a league with the evil one, and it is written in the law that witchcraft shall be punished with death. Your own crew stand ready to accuse you, because one man has been lost on every voyage, and now, the last one, Abraham Långvik, whom they call Långpyts. Fall off before the breeze, man, before you take in water on the lee side !”

“What care I what people say ! What care I what the law decrees ! I sail in all winds. I sail over shoals and rocks, which have broken all other keels than mine. I go dryshod across the sea. I stretch out my hand in the empty air, and draw it back full of gold. No one dares touch me. If any one touches me, he is lost; if any one speaks ill of me, it is all over with him. Old Petterson defied me, and went overboard in the Baltic. The cabin-boy mimicked me in the steerage, and the day following he ate rat poison. Långpyts made up lies about me, and was blown up by the cannon. I succeed in everything. In two years I am going to buy Wasa, and move it to Brändö. I should be able to demand your farm and all that you possess, Father Larsson; but, block of my tackle ! it is too bad for as capable a man as you have been, and so I ask only your daughter, and will make you emperor of all the burghers instead of a plain king, as you have hitherto been.”

He ceased, and watched for the effect his words were expected to produce. But the old burgher king was impenetrable. He did not change a feature, though one who knew him better might have divined that he

was secretly resolved to disarm the dangerous man by stratagem.

CHAPTER XXII.

CAPTAIN GAST'S STORY.

“**I** WANT to ask you one thing,” said Larsson to Captain Gast. “When are you going to leave off your old habit of boasting?”

“I boast!” exclaimed the captain. “The sailing of the Hope will best prove whether I boast.”

“You have had wind in the sails, and made some prosperous trips. To-morrow you may have contrary wind, and some fine day you may make away with ship and crew.”

“I never have contrary wind. I never can be shipwrecked,” replied Captain Gast, with confidence.

“That is all talk. Anything can miscarry.”

The captain smiled disdainfully.

“In short, I believe you are making all this up.”

“Do I lie?”

“Well, you imagine bits of nonsense to yourself, and then want to get me to swallow them.”

“I could really tell you something, representative. I could prove—”

“You can prove nothing.”

“Yes I can.”

“You cannot, I say. You are a fool and a great boaster, and I will not have such a fellow for a son-in-law.”

“Can I have your daughter if I can prove that I have fortune in my hands?” inquired the captain, after a moment's irresolution.

“That would be luck upon luck. But, if you are

successful in everything, you will, of course, be successful in love-making too. How does the thing look which you call a pledge of luck?"

"That depends on whether I care to show it."

"Keep your old-wife's tale—I care nothing about it, and by my faith I think you a great boaster."

"I!"

"Your very self. And there is enough said, I think."

Captain Gast struggled visibly with himself, and several times thrust his hand within his vest, but always drew it back immediately, as though he had burnt his fingers. At last he said: "Promise not to speak of it to any human being, and I will tell you how it is."

It was to this point Larsson had wished to lead his man. But he answered indifferently: "That I can promise. For all that, it is nothing but nonsense."

"It was once the case," began the captain, reluctantly, "that I was a trifle careless, as the representative knows—"

"God and the whole world knows that," replied Larsson.

"Then it happened," continued Gast, "that I chanced, in Stockholm, to drift against a broken-down vagabond, by the name of Calle Sager, and drank a week or two, till the vessel tired of waiting. After that cruise I was just about used up. I had drunk up the whole rigging—cap, jacket, vest, boots, stockings, and at last I sold my shirt for one wretched dram—no one would give more for it. My ragged, tarry trowsers, I still had left, for the reason that no one would have them, even as a gift. But it was in the autumn, and began to be a little damp and chilly to sleep in the doorways. For three days I had not eaten anything but some refuse herring-tails, which I picked up in the market of Kornhamn. I sprung a leak and fell sick. 'Good-bye to you, old tar-clout!' I said to myself. 'A happy journey to you. It may be as well that you

weigh anchor from this voyage.' But you see then I had a dream."

"In a drunken fit, of course."

"I thought that a fine gentleman came to me and asked, 'Do you want to live and fare well in this world?' 'It is all the same to me,' I replied, 'I have had blows enough in my days, and now I am thinking of hoisting sails.'

"'But if I promise to make you rich, and grand?' he asked.

"'That would be devilishly queer for one who is sucking herring-bones,' I said.

"'Well,' said he, 'go to-night at three o'clock to Master Samuel's alley, and you shall see.'

"With these words, he rushed off, so that it cracked in the old shed where I lay freezing in the night, not far from Skan's gate, on Gallows hill. I awoke, and noticed a smell of brimstone in the cabin. Indeed! thought I, if you are of that sort, I will not take wages of you; I might better go to the bottom with the ballast."

"But you took wages, Gast, for all that!"

"I lay as I said, and shivered like a wet dog. My teeth were chattering, and I was gnawing the bark off from a stick of wood. That was my luncheon. Then I heard the clock in St. Jacob's church-tower strike twelve, one, two, and, when it might be half past two, it jerked in all the chain-cables, so that I did not hold out in bringing to any farther. I put out from harbor in fog and darkness, and, first I knew, I was in Master Samuel's alley. The clock struck three."

"And then you knocked at the alehouse door?"

"At that time there was a kind of more elegant alehouse, where the servants of grand gentlemen used to gamble away their masters' money. Light was shining through a crack in the window shutter, and an odor of beefsteak was perceptible; but I stood outside and thought, 'How happy is the one who is sitting in there,

with a dish of meat on one side and a mug of warm grog on the other!’ And just as I was standing there, trying to eat my fill of the smell of the steak, a horrible noise was heard inside, and I perceived there was a fight, and it was not long before a crowd of people rushed out with shrieks and curses. I ran into the nearest port, but had not stood there two minutes before a fellow came rushing after, and when he got within three steps of me he stumbled down like a wing-shot sea-gull. ‘Help me!’ he gasped, and at that moment the other villains ran past, without getting sight of him in the darkness. Now I was a little soft-hearted at that time, and answered instantly, ‘All right;’ and then I was about to roll up my jacket sleeves to fight, but that was needless, for I had drunk it up.

“‘It is all over with me,’ gasped the man, as I stood sprinkling rain-water over his bleeding head.

“‘Nonsense!’ said I, and tried to carry him to an alehouse which I knew. But along the road he lost more and more blood, and finally he begged me to heave him on the stone steps at the wharf.

“‘I am dying,’ he wailed, ‘and I have you to thank for it, you instrument of damnation!’”

“Just so,” said Larsson, with an indifferent nod.

The captain drew a deep sigh, and continued:

“At that cry of complaint I happened to think of my vision in the shed by Skan’s gate, and asked what he meant.

“‘Well,’ gasped the poor fellow, ‘my master had an amulet, which he dropped one day on the floor of his room. The next day I found it in the crack of the floor, but kept it, that I might myself become as rich as my master. And I have become rich, and have been successful in everything; but then I did that which one must not do, if he wants to keep the amulet, and so this night I was attacked by my comrades at the raffle-box, after I had won from them everything they possessed. They have broken their bottles on my

head, and now it is all over with me. But nevermore shall a sinner be tempted by this witchcraft,' said he, and with that he tried to throw something into the stream, but his arm was so weak that the thing fell on the lowest step above the water, so that the stones clinked. I took notice where the amulet fell, and logged after it till I found it. But when I called the fellow on watch to ask him what it was that one might not do in order to lose luck, he had taken to his hammock the way of all the world. When I noticed that he did not stir a fin any more, I felt something like a squirt of North Sea water over my back, and hoisted all sails to scud away from the watchmen, who were coming from Österlång Street. And then the clock struck four in the morning."

At these words the captain wiped the sweat from his forehead, and seemed like a criminal who, against his will, had been forced to confess his crime. The cold, shrewd, penetrating eyes of old Larsson troubled him. He evidently repented of having let him into his secret, but then it was done, and in an apologetic tone he continued :

"May the tackle snarl in all the blocks, if I did anything but what any honest fellow might have done in my place. I took up a thing which lay at my feet, and have been careful on that account not to take wages of the black captain. Is it my fault that, since then, everything has prospered in my hands? The same morning I met an old messmate on the wharf, who took me on board, gave me clothes, and, for the first time in two weeks, let me eat my fill. After I became a sober man, I had favorable wind in all sails. Now, representative, you know how it is, and you can now with good conscience give me the girl."

"Lay by with that matter awhile yet," replied Larsson. "You have told me a story, but who will warrant that there is a true word to be found in it? Let me

take that which you call your amulet, that I may see something of that kind once in the world."

The captain laughed. "No, dear father," said he. "Your fox is not going to bite my goose. You shall not outwit an old ship-rat so easily!"

"But of course you do not want me, in good faith, to take your word for proof? Who was that man that was killed at the gaming, and who was his master?"

"I do not know. It does not concern me. It was dark—in the night. How was I to know a man that was an utter stranger!"

"But you must have had a chance to hear it the next day. Many less important matters are chatted about in Stockholm, than the finding of a man dead at the wharf."

"Shroud and backstay! I say I have heard nothing!"

"Of course you did not kill the fellow yourself, Gast?"

"See here, representative"

"Softly! I assert nothing I merely ask in all kindness. So you know nothing else whatever about the fellow or his master?"

"Nothing, as I told you."

"Swear to that?"

"So help me God, I know nothing more about that matter than what I have already told you."

Larsson smiled in a way that the other did not like. "Well, Gast," said the old man, "since you have told a saga for me, I will tell another for you. One time there was a troll, somewhere in Germany, who undertook to transform turnip-stalks to princes and knights. Those fine gentlemen flaunted awhile in all their pomp, but when the time had come, when all the stalks began to wither in autumn, those noble gentlemen who were nothing but turnip-stalks also fell with them, and shrunk away till nothing was left of them but their fine clothes. Thus it is with you, my dear Gast. The

devil picked you up as you lay like a vagabond in the gutter, and dressed you up as a man. But when the time is come the giver takes his own again, and the man once more becomes precisely the same rag or turnip-stalk which he is, according to his real nature. You say, Gast, that you only need to stretch out your hand into the empty air in order to draw it back again full of gold. Take good heed! That gold is nothing but withered leaves!"

The captain seemed uneasy, took a leather purse out of his breast-pocket, and shook its contents out upon the table. They were no withered leaves, they were bright Hollandish ducats, and he triumphantly cried, "What do you call these?"

"I call them the wages of sin," coldly replied Larsson. "The turnip-stalk is still green, but it is worm-eaten in the root. I will assist your memory, for I was in Stockholm at that time. The murdered man was found not only knocked on the head, but strangled besides at the wharf. Mark what I say!—Strangled!"

The captain blanched. "I never heard that," he stammered.

"The murdered man," continued Larsson, "was a Frenchman by the name of Baptiste, and had been *valet* of the president, Count Bertelsköld, who the year before had first become blind, and then insane, when he lost the amulet."

"Was he?" said the captain falteringly.

"Thus it was," continued the old man inexorably, "and the amulet, which you now wear on a string around your neck, is a little ring of copper, which has come down in the inheritance of the Counts Bertelsköld. It was announced in the churches, that the finder should receive five hundred dollars reward, but no one appeared. Would you like to know something more?"

"No," said the captain, with a motion to leave.

"Listen, however, to one thing more, which you can bear in mind. Do you know what it was that one

must not do, if he would keep his good luck? It is an old superstitious saying, that the ring carried luck with it to whomsoever wore it, but only so long as he did not commit perjury."

Captain Gast turned as white as a sheet.

"And now you have sworn falsely!" suddenly exclaimed Larsson, with a thundering voice.

The frightened man fell on his knees, and began to sob.

"You have not only sworn falsely, but you strangled the Frenchman, who lay wounded at the wharf!"

"Mercy! Have mercy!" groaned the captain, in extreme terror.

"Give me the sinful trash, that I may throw it where neither sun nor moon shines! That is the only thing that can help you now," sternly exclaimed Larsson.

With trembling hand, the captain drew forth the little copper ring, which he wore on a string around his neck.

"That is good," said Larsson. "Now you can go."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE MEETING IN THE GARDEN.

BEHIND Larsson's large yard, which was almost always full of peasants, horses and loads, lay a little garden, so charming and well-tended, that it was a delight to all flower-lovers in Wasa. This garden was altogether the work of Esther Larsson, and it was here that in the summer she used to take a breathing spell, after her household cares and attendance upon her peevish father. Every bed was so even, every walk

so well weeded, that it was a delight to behold. Three quarters were devoted to useful things, such as onions, dill, parsley, marjoram, carrots, parsnips, radishes, and peas, beds of several kinds. The fourth was exclusively occupied by such rare and beautiful flowers as no one except the wealthy Larsson family could afford to order from the gardener of Stockholm. Between the quarters went finely sanded walks, and beside them stood hedges of roses, lilacs, and inviting gooseberry bushes. There was not much room for trees, but those which were there were the more beautiful. Here were to be seen a few maples, lindens and elms,—rare in East Bothnia,—beside a few half-grown pines, which were the especial favorites of the possessor. Even a couple of apple-trees, and as many cherry-trees, eagerly caught the warmth of the short summers, and bloomed every spring, but bore, only in warm summers such as the present, small, somewhat sour, and yet greatly admired fruit.

At the extreme end of the garden stood a luxuriant hop-arbor, and within it a little summer-house, or rather play-house, as it was usually called, so little and so elegant that it might more fitly be called a doll-press. Here in summer stood Esther's harp, and here it was also that the old father sometimes used to spend an hour in hearing its sweet tones, which had always gone straight through his stern heart. But Larsson did not know why the harp of David had constantly become dearer to his daughter. It was because so many memories from departed days of youth still continued to dwell in the strings and awaken long since rejected thoughts to life again. In that art, she had had a teacher whom she could not forget, and, when the night-wind wandered through the branches of the young pines,—when the breeze swept in through the window of the little summer-house and quietly stirred the harp-strings, then Esther often thought, "It is his invisible hand that is waking the music,—it is the spirit of my

dead friend ! For he who was mine is dead to me, and the one who still bears the same name and the same features, far across the blue sea, he is another, a stranger, whom I do not know ! ”

Esther had now stolen away once more to the green garden and the pretty summer-house, to escape that man whom her father had forced her to accept. She needed solitude, she longed for tears. Oh ! those solitary tears ! They are like the dew of evening, which washes the dust of day from the herbs and bathes their verdure pure in the sight of Heaven !

The July sun glowed warm above the town. Rain had fallen during the night and a vapor was rising from the moist walks. All vegetation was drinking light and absorbing warmth.

Much sorrow had taught Esther to bow her refractory heart in humility before the searcher of all hearts. But to-day she was very heavy-hearted and confused. She could not pray, could not give up, could not forget. Her whole soul was in rebellion and discord. The dead had arisen, the vanished had come up out of their graves. What had she not suffered, how had she not struggled, to uproot the memory of one man from the olive-yard of her heart ! And in the hour when she thought she had succeeded, he had again stood before her, had again called her his,—and her peace was fled. Once more his spirit floated on the wind that whistled through the pines, and his invisible hand swept the harp-strings; but it was no longer the spirit of the dead, but of the living, and his breath mingled, like a presage of lightning, in the air around her.

Gladly would she have given all that she possessed to have wept out her grief, but she could not. The dark cloud within her gave no blessed rain. She swept the strings, she sung the same psalm of David which had always quelled the unquiet billows of her soul, but they continued to swell above their banks,

and there was bitterness instead of sweetness in the sound of the strings.

“O Lord!” she moaned, “when I kept silence my soul fainted.”

“And why should you keep silence?” at that moment said a too-well-known voice beside her, and the little door of the summer-house was darkened by a tall man, enveloped in a long traveling-cloak.

“Why should you keep silence?” repeated Bertelsköld, when Esther gazed toward him without reply, and a death-like pallor overspread her cheeks. “You know already that from this hour you are mine, before the world as before God, and no one shall part us more.”

“How came you hither?” said Esther, still trembling, for anger had restored her courage. She was still a woman, disappointed by one to whom she had once given her faith; and now did he think so basely of her as that she should again accept of him her betrayed happiness, as a gift?

“I came to seek your father and you,” replied the count. “When I was going past the back gate of the garden, I heard the sound of that harp, and that song which has never passed out of my memory.”

“My father lives there in the house fronting the great street, and can be found, if the count needs a bill of exchange,” said Esther, referring to Bertelsköld’s first visit in her childhood; and she arose to go.

But Bertelsköld closed the door. “No,” said he, “I have not traveled across sea and land, to lose you again the moment I have regained you. Esther, I know I have grieved you much, that I have acted unjustly, and that you have a right to speak to me as to a stranger in your father’s grounds. But you must hear me, and when you have heard me, you will understand that I am not as culpable as I perhaps appear. For many years, alas! there have been between us night and darkness, and mists of the sea; but, believe me,

everything shall yet be made clear and right. You cannot deny me that prayer."

Esther's self-willed blood overflowed as in the days of her youth. A new color suddenly suffused her pale cheeks, and she said: "I do not know what purpose an explanation would now serve between us. If sir count has forgotten that he is a married man, I have not forgotten that I am a betrothed woman."

"Nothing else?" exclaimed the count lightly—too lightly.

"For whom do you take me? and for whom do you wish me to take you?" inquired Esther, in a tone in which anger and pain struggled for supremacy.

"Understand me rightly," said Bertelsköld. "I feared you had knit more indissoluble bonds. That shall not have power to prevent our happiness."

"I beg you, sir count, let me go, before I am obliged to despise the man whom I once"

She did not finish. It was too hard for her.

"But is it possible, Esther, that you know nothing of my recent life? Has no one told you that I am free, that it is nearly three years since death bereft me of my first wife? Or how am I to understand those cruel words, with which you meet again, for the first time, one who has never ceased to love you—even when that love came in conflict with new duties?"

"I did not know that your countess was dead;—one ought not to insult either dead or living," replied Esther.

She could not refrain from a deep breath, to ease her sorrow-burdened heart. That man after all was not so frivolous, so culpable, as she had imagined ever since their last meeting.

"Listen to me," seriously continued the count, as he obliged her to be seated again. "I gave my wife all I was able to give her,—my friendship, my sincere esteem, which she deserved. More, she could not ask. Have you ever guessed what struggles it costs a man

to sacrifice his life's happiness to his filial duty? You knew my mother;—a nobler, more high-aspiring heart never beat on earth. And still there is nothing on earth so high, nothing so noble and strong, as amidst all changes to stand elevated above human weakness. Her weakness was, that the only son, the only one who now bore our honored name, should seek a wife equal to himself in birth, in order—as she imagined—to leave that name in all respects undimmed in inheritance to coming generations. Believe me, she esteemed you highly, she loved you as a daughter, but she did not feel able to change what she regarded the ordinance of our fate.”

“I know it,” replied Esther. “So long as I live, I shall never forget that it was she, who, when I was in disgrace and misfortune, reached me her rescuing hand.”

“Well, then you will also understand my choice, when it rested with me to give her sorrow or joy. You know I was her all in the world. How could I hesitate when I at last perceived that it was no longer possible to change her views? And my sacrifice has been rewarded. Two years ago, two loving hearts ceased to beat. One of them belonged to an angel in goodness, my aunt, Countess Ebba Liewen. Within two weeks, my mother followed her to the mansions of the blest. Her last word was a blessing upon her son.”

Esther's eyes moistened, but she was silent.

“A mother's blessing,” continued the count, “is a precious treasure to all living, but to the Bertelskölds more than to all others. A saying is current among us, that the father's curse and the mother's blessing have contended for our family ever since its beginning. There is no middle course for us; none of us dares refuse, when he can win the better lot. I bought my high-born wife for that price; and for the promise not to see you any more, not even to write to you, Countess Malin was content, without my heart. Our life

was the life of two friends,—cool but good. She gave me a son and a daughter.”

Esther covered her eyes.

“Does it grieve you, my Esther?” inquired the count.

“No; I was only thinking that those poor children had lost their mother.”

“You shall repair that loss for them. You will be a good mother to them.”

Esther sorrowfully shook her head.

“I understand,” continued the count. “Every thoughtful woman shrinks from that responsibility. That was why I long hesitated to ask this of you; that was the reason I delayed about immediately making use of my freedom, and hastening to you. But every day it has become clearer to me, that no one but you can be a wife to me and a mother to my children. Do not fear that the court or my titled relatives will look down upon you. The nobility of your soul is greater than theirs. You are more than titled, you are an intrinsically noble woman. They will become acquainted with you, esteem you highly, and, if need be, stand in awe of your superiority. And aside from that, it is my intention to withdraw from court. I have grown weary of all that chase after an outer pomp, to conceal an inner feebleness. And, thank God, I am neither Hat nor Cap. Yes, do not look so surprised,—those names which now mean everything are nothing to me. Next autumn we will move out to our beautiful Falkby, where you once spent such sorrowful days, and where you shall now spread blessing and joy around you. Since you were there last, I have inherited the property of my wealthy uncle. We need not henceforth deny ourselves any comfort. Is it not true, my Esther? We shall be very happy!”

And, transported by his own picture of the future, Bertelsköld tenderly kissed the hand of her who was to

be his wife. But slowly, almost reluctantly, she withdrew it, and after a few moment's silence said:

“A free hand, honestly offered, is no disgrace, and pardon me if my words sounded otherwise, before I knew what I now know. I thank you, for I believe, indeed, I very cheerfully believe, that you mean it well. But have you never imagined that the will of another than yourself might enter the question as to this union, which you regard as so decided, since *you* are now free?”

“Think you I have forgotten,” said the count, “that your father is of hard timber and not easy to bend? But he will not be able to withstand the united prayers of us both.”

“I fear that you do not know him yet. But, even if you obtained his consent, even if my promise to another laid no hindrance in the way, do you believe there would be two who would entreat my father thus?”

“How? Yourself, Esther? Can you have the heart to thrust from you my free, honest hand?” exclaimed Bertelsköld, greatly surprised, for that had not for a moment occurred to him.

“Thus it is,” said Esther, hardly audibly.

“Unhappy me!” exclaimed the count, covering his brow with his hand. “She no longer loves me!”

CHAPTER XXIV.

LOVE'S DEBIT AND CREDIT.

“**A**ND who has said that I do not love you?” asked Esther Larsson.

“Then you jest cruelly with a man who is ready to offer his life for you!” replied Bertelsköld.

“Listen to me, count!” said Esther, while her voice, which in the beginning trembled, by degrees grew firmer and fuller. “It is well that we two become acquainted with each other. I have misunderstood you, and you have misunderstood me.”

“Speak, I pray you, but open no chasm that shall separate us!”

“You have called me intrinsically noble. God knows that I am only a poor, weak woman, and the best proof is that, to this day, I have not been able to efface your memory from my lacerated heart. But I am not so unworthy your love, so forgetful of a woman’s worth, that I should heap up an undeserved humiliation by accepting reparation as a favor. You have done right in the matter, although perhaps somewhat selfishly; but all men are like that. Have you, meantime, ever thought of what *I* have suffered during long years, when he who swore me fidelity for life broke his oath and abandoned me without a single word of comfort or explanation? A man lives for the world; a man has a hundred other objects in life than the happiness or unhappiness of love, and, if one fails him, it is his right and duty to direct the powers of his soul toward a new activity. But a woman lives and dies for her love. It is the air she breathes, the sunlight in which she blooms, and without it she languishes. I do not say that she must give her soul a price to earthly idols, for she too has a goal and a God beyond that. But, without love, she is a stalk of this world’s garden, pulled from its root, and thrown to wither in the path for human feet. Have you ever guessed, Count Bertelsköld, what it means to a woman’s heart to be thus pulled up by the root and thrown to wither—not uprooted by death, which always sweetens a great calamity with a reconciliation, but by an indifferent human hand, which does not even know what it does?”

“Forbear, Esther! You will crush my heart! I never imagined”

“No, you have never guessed it, and that is why I am still sitting here, and that is why I have answered just as frankly as you have asked. But judge for yourself: what should you think of a woman who, after having suffered such a mortal insult—yes, more than that, after having been as nearly annihilated as it is possible, and still have a God,—would nevertheless be immediately ready again to extend her hand to the one who had trampled her under foot? Would you call such a woman intrinsically noble? Is it to such a one you would confide the care of your children, the duty of training them in virtue and noble principles? Should you not much more look upon her as unworthy to become the honest wife of even the humblest cottager?”

“You are right,” replied Bertelsköld, full of admiration for that exalted soul, whom, with pain, he was conscious of having lost. “If my repentance and my prayers cannot reconcile you as to the wrong I have done you, you are right. It is not you who will accept my hand; it is I, who beg you to make for me and my family the honor-conferring sacrifice of becoming my wife.”

“And what do you think people would say about it? They would say: ‘The vain, despised village-girl was only awaiting that occasion in order once more to capture the noble courtier in her net. See! there goes Countess Larsson!’ your jesters at the court would exclaim. A Larsson countess! Believe me, your title and my name fit together like red roses in the needles of the pine. It will not do. Thus much I have inherited of the traditions of my family.”

“Yet there was a time when you thought otherwise,—when you yourself deplored this unhappy family feud.”

“I was young then, and I am young no longer. I

also speak of the judgment of the world, without attaching to it much importance. As it was then, we might have broken us a path through any wall of ice that divides hearts. It is otherwise now. We no longer have that youthful faith in life, before which the most impossible is a plaything. We no longer have either the right or the power to reconstruct the world. We must go our separate ways: you on the heights, I in the vale. If at any time we meet on the border between the two, you will remain a count, I a woman of the people. Whether, for all that, we shall meet as old friends, rests with you."

"O, my Esther! My first, my only true love! Are we to be parted forever, when it depends only upon ourselves to be re-united for our whole life!" exclaimed Bertelsköld, grasping her hand, no longer able to control his emotion.

"For shame! You, who are a man and a nobleman, to bear the inevitable with less courage than I, who am a weak woman!" replied Esther, and no one knew of the tear which, at these words, watered her long lashes.

"No, cruel, unfeeling creature!" continued Bertelsköld; "talk no more to me about your love! You have never, never loved as I have done!"

"Do you believe that?" was the painful question.

"I am sure of it," exclaimed the count. "Your heart is as cold as your East Bothnian ice. Love is quick to forgive. But you have remembrance only for what you call your disgrace. Your sorrows!—ah! what are they but a mask to hide a new engagement? You are bound to another."

"That is true. And you have given me twelve years to prepare for it."

"You love that other! Behold there the whole enigma of your refusal! And that other one is younger and more lovable than I am! He knew better how to win your heart than I!"

In all her sadness, it was impossible for Esther Larsson not to smile, when she thought of the picture which Bertelsköld, without suspecting it, drew of his former burly groom, the honest Istvan. But she was careful not to enlighten him as to his mistake.

“I believe you are jealous,” said she, with a smile.

Bertelsköld was now in a gloomy mood. “Be assured,” said he, “that I shall find that man before I leave Wasa and you. I want to know the audacious fellow who has ventured to snatch my life-happiness from me. If he is worthy of you—well, then it is fate that has parted our paths. If he is not, so much the worse for him—and you! Farewell!”

And Count Bertelsköld departed—violent, angry, unreasonable, as the ordinarily gentle and sensitive man sometimes was.

Thoughtfully, Esther saw him go away, by the same path he had come, through a little side-gate in the enclosing hedge of the garden. Contrary to custom, that gate had been left open by a couple of old women, who in the early morning had weeded the garden, for to-day not a single weed must be visible in Wasa.

The count had not vanished so unobserved, however, that Penna, who came to seek his bride, did not catch a glimpse of a corner of his cloak in the gateway. It had happened with Penna, as with many another phlegmatic nature, that when he had fairly arrived at a contemplation of his new and unexpected happiness, he had all of a sudden fallen (or at least believed himself to have fallen) in love up to his ears. And now when he saw a strange gentleman slipping away, when he happened to think what old Larsson had shortly before confided to him about an old flame which might possibly become dangerous to the happiness of the betrothed, the remarkable event occurred of which

Penna had certainly never dreamed, that he suddenly became quite as nearly up to the ears jealous, as he had up to that time been inaccessible to all the vagaries of love.

It was just when our good Penna had got himself worked into these new-fashioned feelings sufficiently to be as unreasonable as possible, that Esther met him in the garden.

"Who was that gentleman who went out from here?" he inquired, as he stretched his eyes like an owl at her.

"What gentleman?" said Esther, who was not inclined to confess the truth.

"The one who was with you just now in the play-house."

"Must you needs know that?"

"I think that I have a right to know."

"Do not ask me, my dear. Be content if I tell you that everything is as it ought to be."

"But I say that I want to know, and that right away. I don't intend to put up with any arts from you."

"Indeed! Well, then I will tell. But perhaps you will regret it."

"Who was it?" asked Penna, curiously.

"Do not be frightened!"

"What nonsense are you talking?"

"Hold tight to the paling, so you will not fall!"

Penna was obliged against his will to laugh. "Well, you will be a pretty family affliction when you once get warm in the clothes at Bertila farm!" said he.

"Now stop your ears!"

"Then am I going to know?"

"Yes, it was jump, Penna, jump!"

"What an idea! Will it make me jump?"

"It was"

"Well?"

"The king!"

Penna did not fall, neither did he jump—for that was contrary to his nature—but he did stare in a way which might be compared with that of the well-known pike, whose eyes it is said are as large as wooden plates. “The king?” he repeated.

“Is it so very wonderful?” said Esther, with a laugh. “Do you not know that I and my cousin, and Eric in the bargain, have all been at court? The king was so kind as to come and ask how we were, and, besides, he told me to greet you, and say to you that you would do well to comply with my wishes, and those of other sensible people. Bear that in mind!”

With these words, Esther left him alone to ponder upon that important news, while she stole into her little chamber after that fleeting jest, to pour out her tears unseen.

Penna stood awhile amazed, nonplussed, and confused in mind. He could easily understand that his betrothed had only been joking with him, but what it meant was an enigma to him. He gave no more than fair credence to Esther’s words. The evil spirit of jealousy had now obtained the mastery over him, and he resolved to give himself no rest until he had made out the real state of things.

As, in a grim mood, he turned back to the yard, he heard old Larsson’s voice giving commands to some sailors to row him immediately out to the Hope, together with Captain Gast. The strangeness of the expedition on such a day, and in the midst of the bustle about the king, did not attract Penna’s attention. With grave steps he strode out into the town to try to discover his supposed rival.

CHAPTER XXV.

BRÄNDÖ ROADSTEAD.

REPRESENTATIVE Larsson, accompanied by Captain Neptunus Gast, started down to the harbor. Upon the latter's person the story of the turnip-stalks seemed already to be illustrated, for he looked like a potato field after a frosty night. The hat, but now so stiff, slouched around his ears, the starched frill hung drooping outside his vest; in one hour the fellow had become wan and bowed, and like a wet dog followed his stern employer, who hardly vouchsafed him a glance.

Not far from the harbor they met Count Bertelsköld, who had started out on a walk around the town, perhaps to revive old memories, perhaps also to give the stormy billows within his soul a breathing-time in which to subside. Larsson recognized him in a moment, and a peculiarly scornful smile played across the old man's withered lips.

Bertelsköld also recognized his old hereditary enemy, whom he had just before wished to find and offer a splendid reconciliation by asking for the burgher's daughter as his countess. This meeting now seemed to him unseasonable and repellent; but being too much a man of the world to allow his feelings to be observed, he saluted the old man courteously as an old acquaintance.

Larsson seemed to be cheerful and merry, too. After he had obtained information as to the count's journey and the arrival of the king, which was not to occur before evening, he proposed to the count to bear him company on an hour's excursion in the roadstead.

Bertelsköld consented, and the sloop pushed out from shore.

The day was sunny and fine, and a gentle breeze filled the white sails. They talked about the diet and about the situation of the parties. The count inquired jokingly if the representative was still just as ardent a Cap as he used to be.

“In body and soul,” replied Larsson. “And you, count, are probably a Hat, as you have always been?”

“From head to foot,” ironically replied Bertelsköld.

“But a hat that reaches from head to foot sinks down over the eyes and blinds a man. What says his majesty—I mean, in all deference, what says *her* majesty about it?”

“Her majesty says that one must keep well with all parties, in order to knock the one with the other, as occasion may require.”

“Then I fear that the Hat is the one that will be knocked in the head first,” said Larsson.

“That is possible—but for the present it is the Cap that has fallen off from the peg,” replied Bertelsköld, in the same jesting tone.

“So,” resumed the representative, with a shrewd smile, “so it is decided that we are to remain enemies, and each on his part is not to neglect at the first convenient opportunity to hurl the other overboard. But is it not possible for us to close a truce with each other for one day?”

“I see no impossibility in that. I had intended to propose something similar myself.”

“Well, then we are agreed. It will be a great honor to me and my house to see sir count as a guest at my daughter’s wedding, which is to take place in a few weeks.”

Well had Larsson calculated the stab which he aimed at his adversary, but it did not come quite so unexpectedly as he had supposed it would, and so lost its force before it reached the heart. One fleet moment

the face of Bertelsköld darkened, but he quickly replied:

“If it is possible for me to remain in Wasa, I shall have the honor of being present, in one way or another.”

“No one can decide the *way* better than yourself, count,” said the old man, with emphasis. It was not exactly clear to him what the count meant.

Bertelsköld bit his lip. He could never have found a more fitting moment for a declaration of that which burdened his heart. But near him, at the helm, sat Gast, who, in all his wretchedness, silently, but with the eyes of a basilisk, glared at the representative, during this conversation. So that which ought to have been said remained unspoken.

“To-day is my birthday,” resumed Larsson, after a pause. “On such days many old memories are revived. To-day I hunted up that old ax, which belonged to the progenitor of my family, and gave it to the man who is to be my son-in-law. I have not much faith in superstition, but I confess that I should not like to see that worn ax-blade go out of my family. You see, it is always a reminder of one’s ancestors. I believe your family, too, has something like it, count? An old ring, if I remember rightly?”

“So it is said, but I know nothing about it,” said the count, laconically.

“How? Can it be, count, that you have lost the old treasure, which has come down in inheritance through so many generations?”

“My uncle, the president, is said to have kept it as a curiosity, but at his death it was lost—I know not how, and it is also of little consequence to me.”

“That is true; I forget that you cannot have heard all the stupid stories which were in circulation in my youth, sixty or seventy years ago. What follies humanity can concoct! It is said that the ring of the Bertelskölds, which was worn by two of the kings of Swe-

den, would bring with it happiness in everything. It was claimed that the count's whole family should stand or fall with that ring. I believe that the ring was even looked upon as an invention of the devil, to seduce mankind through vanity. Or, how is it, captain?—But how are you managing the helm? Why, you are veering before the wind, straight toward Klemetsö shoal!”

Captain Gast muttered something unintelligibly, and kept on.

“I have heard some superstition related,” said the count, with more interest than he cared to display, “but it has slipped my memory. You, who were in Stockholm at the time my uncle died, might perhaps have heard something about the finder of the ring, or rather the one who stole it?”

“Upon my soul, I had something else to think of at that time, when the Hollanders nabbed my splendid fleet of grain ships. Still, I am inclined to think that the thief, or receiver of the stolen property, has not escaped his just punishment. Or, how is it, captain? Have you heard anything about it?”

Instead of replying, Captain Neptunus made a horrible grimace. At that instant, the sloop struck against a submerged rock, and careened alongside, but was instantly lifted afloat again by the next wave, for it had now come under the influence of a stronger wind, which blew in through Brändö Sound.

“Luff!” growled the proprietor; “you steer like a Nerpesian. A second more, and we might have turned keel upward But what were we talking about? Oh! people say, count, that your uncle, the president, by the aid of that amulet elevated himself to high dignities and great wealth. It was not so bad to possess such a good fairy.”

“Let us say no more about it.”

“Pardon me for being so bold,” resumed the representative, and his tone which had been jesting, sud-

denly became serious. "You have a proof there, count, of what stuff that power is, which wants to place itself between the king and people. Your great-grandfather was the son of a peasant's daughter, and afterward became cavalier in the Thirty Years War; he thus rose in the world to a general's dignity, and to a princely marriage. Instead of attributing this to his soldier luck and his good blade, some fool hit upon speaking about the amulet. And the more people believed on it, the prouder the family became of its great fortune, which was reputed to be the work of heaven, although I, in my simplicity, look upon that fortune as contrived by Beelzebub."

"Be so good as to speak of *your* business," proudly responded Bertelsköld.

"No, pardon me, I have spoken the truth to your father and grandfather, and I intend to talk plainly to you too. I think on the whole you are a good fellow, though a little deluded by trifles, and if you were not my enemy, you would perhaps be my friend. But you, like all your kind, are distracted with proud thoughts, and God have mercy on you if you ever get back the ring, for then it will be with you as it has been with all the others. I think it would be doing you a favor to free you forever from that cursed, ill-boding trash."

"I do not know what you mean," replied Bertelsköld. "If it is to insult me and scandalize my family that you have offered me your company to-day, it would have been more worthy your gray hair not to compel me"

"To what?"

"To tell you what an old man ought to know better than I. Pride is the last fault which one class of society ought to impute to another. It can dwell beneath the rags of a beggar, and it can swell very high beneath the gold-lined jacket of a burgher!"

Larsson smiled. "We will not discuss that," said he coldly. "I would like to ask you if you would not

look upon the one who freed you from that miserable spirit of pride in the king's ring, as the benefactor of yourself and family?"

"I should answer you: mind your own business, and do not meddle with that which does not concern you."

"Indeed! Well let us say no more about it. Sir count, this is the deepest place in the whole roadstead,—full thirty fathoms, I should think. It is not much compared with the depths of the sea, but considerable for a shoal coast like ours. Anything that falls into the water here will not see daylight again before the day of judgment. Hold your own there at the rudder! Don't you see the sails luff?"

Bertelsköld did not reply.

Larsson now rose from the stern seat of the sloop, and held a little faintly shining object between his thumb and middle finger. "I wonder," said he, "who would care to look upon the bottom of the sea for that which I now hold in my hand!"

Hardly had he pronounced these words before Captain Gast, with gestures of the wildest fury, threw himself upon him, and tried to snatch the object from his hand. A desperate struggle ensued. The sloop, without helm, luffed in the wind, and then instantly backed before shivering sails. Besides the three persons aft, there were two sailors in the fore part of the boat. In the first surprise, these men did not stir, probably because the crew of the Hope fully and firmly believed that any one who touched Captain Gast was death's man, without reprieve.

But the captain found another antagonist, from whom it was not easy to escape. Bertelsköld, in his turn, threw himself upon the assailant, and jerked him backward so that his broad shoulders cracked. When Gast saw himself conquered, he tried to hurl himself and Larsson overboard together. The old man would have been lost, if Bertelsköld's strong arm had

not, in the very moment of his fall, pulled him back into the careening sloop. And it was not long before the captain lay disabled at the bottom of the barge, his hands tied behind him with a rope lying near. The sloop drifted toward shore, and the sailors did not stir.

“Haul in the sheets, you dogs! Count, take the helm!” commanded Larsson, with wonderful coolness.

The barge beat to windward, and approached the same point where the struggle had begun. Then the old man again rose from the stern seat.

“You took a good hold, Count Bertelsköld,” said he; “and I am going to prove my gratitude for it. Now we are again in thirty fathoms of water. I wish it was twice as deep, but it will probably suffice. Now pay attention—and you, too, old glutton, there in the bottom! Do you see what I hold in my hand? Clink! . . . now there it lies, eternally buried in the depth of the sea!”

A sound like the soft snapping of a lute-string was at that moment distinguished, faintly but plainly, as the object sunk under the surface of the water.

“What was that?” exclaimed Bertelsköld.

“It was the king’s ring,” calmly replied Larsson.

“What have you done! Is it thus you reward me for saving your life?”

“Yes,” replied the representative, “and many a man, I think, has paid his rescuer worse than I have done. Now we are quits. Listen to me. I take heaven and earth to witness that *so surely as that ring shall never more behold the light of day, so surely shall no connection ever take place between the Larssons and Bertelskölds, until the end of time* We can now go back to town. Lie there, miserable bit of copper, which has caused the temporal and eternal ruin of so many men! Lie there, you delusion of the devil, till the day of doom, and may the very fishes of the sea shun the spot where your cursed deviltry lies buried in the sand!”

CHAPTER XXVI.

MORE ABOUT THE KING'S RETINUE AND TRAVELS.

FOR more than an hour, the great dinner in the Larsson house had been waiting the return of the chief personage. The ham had dried, the crusted turnips had become over-brown, the veal roast was burnt, the gravy had stiffened, and the sugared pastry had already been standing a long time, respectfully ranged on the large silver dish. All had been wondering what important business had induced the old representative, on such a festive day, and just before dinner, to make such a trip to the roadstead. At last he returned, wearier than he himself cared to have observed. That which had occurred on Brändö roadstead remained a secret. The sailors had been paid for keeping silence, and as soon as the shore was reached, Captain Gast had been set free, with the notification that if he wished to avoid punishment he was to get out of town as soon as possible.

Around the large table the family was now gathered, in three rows: first the older and more distinguished, next the younger, and finally children and servants. In the place of honor sat the old master of the house; at his right, the sons with their wives; at his left, Esther with her betrothed, and Larsson's niece, Marie. After these came the rest, according to age and dignity. The second son, pastor Bertel, blessed the food; all did honor to the preparations, which had become the more thorough the longer they had waited; and finally a hymn of thanksgiving was sung.

All this being fairly completed, the master of the house betook himself to his siesta, while the guests dis-

persed to view the preparations for the king's arrival. And it was not long before one forerunner after another made his appearance. Court-steward Åberg, surveyor of the kitchen Björck, court-baker Kammecker, court-waiter Laurent, and the master cooks, Severin and Aurelius, with their servants,* had arrived early in the forenoon, with the king's kitchen, and with their imposing arrangements, set the whole town in a stir.

It was decided upon the royal route, that his majesty should rest a day in Wasa, after the fatigues of the journey; and as the father of the country was not in the least a despiser of a good kitchen, it must lie affectionately near the city's heart to hand in everything pertaining to it, which lay in its power. Ever since spring, therefore, calves, pigs, geese, and even a few turkeys at the residence, had enjoyed the most careful tending in order in due time to offer their lives for king and country. The most delightful milk had been bespoke, and the thickest cream which had ever been produced in the dairy of a town; for those discreet Wasa burghers, then as in a far later time, understood the art of uniting with a profitable trade a judicious rural economy; and then, as in later times, herds of fine cows were seen morning and evening to wander along the streets of the town, to and from their summer pasture (but which rambles nowadays, for the sake of necessary consideration for the cleanliness of the streets, must take place on by-ways), and the haymaking, which occurred just at this time, was a no less important season here than in the rural villages round about. Besides other good things, care had been taken to be able to offer fresh spinach and other green things from the vegetable gardens; and during all that light July night, the youth of the near-

* Butler Hornay, butcher's-man Ekerman, and others. A complete list of Adolf Frederick's suite on this remarkable occasion is still preserved in Wasa. The whole retinue during the Finnish journey rose to seventy-eight persons, but they were not all present in Wasa.

est villages had been out picking cloudberries and strawberries to be able to offer the majesty of the realm something really toothsome from the products of the country. All this was now brought for disposal by the lordly cooks, and those mighty gentlemen, who flaunted in their fine white aprons, were sometimes pleased to acknowledge with a slight nod their gracious pleasure at the humble zeal of the good people.

Besides Count Bertelsköld, who had come with the prefect, there arrived later in the day court quartermaster Baron Forssner, Colonel Baron Charles Adlerfelt, Ensign Baron Löwenhjelm, with other gentlemen, and a few of the royal lackeys. For every carriage which was seen by Runsar village, where the first large triumphal arch flaunted its decorations in the sunshine, a cheer was sent up by the assembled people, who in holiday attire stood in dense crowds on the sides of the road, and clambered on the fences from the village as far as to the southern gate of the town. Each time the gentlemen and lackeys answered with an aristocratic smile, and each time the people found themselves deceived in their hopes. In the crowd there were court clerks, seamen, and other thorough-paced political wiseacres, who had been in Stockholm, and knew a thing or two. These with a knowing look pointed out which of the gentlemen arriving were regarded as Hats, and which of them were known as Caps in their political opinions. Some of the male spectators wore caps trimmed with glass beads and cock's feathers, and others, for the decoration of the day, wore hats of home manufacture. So when the crowd of people huzzaed for the king, but found themselves disappointed, in vexation they began the witty trick of swinging nothing but caps in the air as often as a Hat went past, but whenever a Cap appeared the hats flew to the very sky. And it amused the people indescribably. Those, too, who had no idea of the real meaning, followed in their joyfulness the example given,

and there was a noise and a jubilation which was of course interpreted as mere humble demonstrations of delight. The images of the clouds on the political horizon reflected themselves in this way like a transient auroral light far up in the northern regions.

The king himself but it will perhaps be pardoned us if we give the following from a poetic description, "without ceremony," of his journey through the domains of Finland:

- " To Degerby, Sottunga, Korpoa flood,
Yungfru and Mjösund the king wendeth;
Children send praise to the home of the Good
Who to them his anointed now sendeth.
Hango Head, Baresund, Porcala Naze,
With Sveaborg, stern in his glory,
Lift up their voices our hero to praise,
And love to re-echo his story.
- " Helsingfors houseth the hero awhile,
Then leave of old Logé he taketh
Whose surge, with the kindest summer-time smile,
To speed on the royal craft breaketh.
No sooner our ADOLF sets foot on the land,
Than all in their reverence are vying;
Blessing his footsteps, each one is at hand,
While sounds of sweet music are sighing.
- " And thus is the king received, let none forget
By Finns that are upright and loyal;
Oh! scarce on our borders his foot doth he set,
Ere he winneth allegiance most royal.
Then, amidst words of endearment, he views
The castle ULRICA of story,
And fortress of Långorn, with else he might choose,
And learns how they gained their great glory.
- " Midsummer's day with delight is thus spent,
And prayers, as in Sweden, ascending;
At this King ADOLF seems greatly content,
His journey to Brobergé bending.
Borgo in turn fills the welcoming cup,
Her ruler and father rejoicing,
Who to the temple, like David, goes up,
His comfort and happiness voicing."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE KING'S ARRIVAL AND THE PROVOST'S SPEECH.

AFTER the people had thus been in motion ever since the early morning, King Adolf Frederick, the father of the country, at last arrived, between seven and eight o'clock in the evening. Nothing was neglected to make the entry into the town as splendid as possible. Beside the king in the elegant carriage drawn by four horses sat his excellence Count Claes Ekebladh and body physician Petersen. Next behind them rode General Baron Ungern Sternberg with Adjutant Rehausen; next came Knight Marshal Baron Löwen, with Judge Schutzen, and thus through the whole series of suite and attendance, even to Tornerhjelm the page, and Bedat the *valet*, Hornay the butler, and Asmüs the gun-bearer, whose remarkable name has also been preserved to posterity.* The prefect had gone to meet his majesty a little distance from the town, while the officers, clergymen, and burghers of the place, with foreheads perspiring, hats in hand and backs bent, stood by the newly-painted customs gate, which was adorned with the glorious arms of the city of Wasa, and with the royal escutcheon.

When the first sergeant came riding, driving the people out of the way as with a broom, when after him the royal outriders leaped forward on their foaming steeds, and when at last the carriages were seen in the bend of the road at Runsar, a hurrah arose. The king caused the procession to move moderately,

* Adolf Frederick loved pomp on journeys. Tessin makes a note of it in his journal: "King Frederick of Prussia traveled to Pyremont with a retinue of seven; in 1761 King Adolf Frederick traveled to Loka with four hundred and fifty horses."

and bowed graciously on every side. The deportment of the people was dignified. Those backs were not accustomed to low bendings. Still, Adolf Frederick was really beloved—beloved with the love of hope, for he had done nothing yet but accept the crown; but this alone had given him homage in East Bothnia, which did not fancy the government by the aristocracy, and the diet wrangles under the late King Frederick.

“Just see how heavenly gracious he looks!” murmured some of the multitude.

“And so mild! And no prouder than other Christian people!” said others.

“Mercy on us! I do believe he bowed to me! May be he knows me?” exclaimed the innkeeper’s wife from Martois, highly amazed and flattered, as she stood in her new starched camlet clothes like a wheat-roll among rye cakes.

“Hold your tongue!” growled a ragged old beggar, a Carolin from Wörå, turning around. “As though people had not seen kings before! A king ought to be proud and haughty. The majesty of the kingdom ought to have arms like crowbars, and know how to give a good blow with them. And he ought to ride so that the sparks would fly from the stones, and not sit there like a stuffed woolsack on soft carriage cushions! There was a different kind of powder in King Charles!” and at these words he lifted his ragged hat.

“But see how the prefect is bowing!” whispered others in the crowd. “Bless me! How limber they are in the spine, those haughty gentlemen, who generally look so far down on other honest people!” and the low bows of the prefect redoubled the cheers all around.

With difficulty these demonstrations of delight were brought to silence; for the reason why the royal carriage paused at the gate was nothing less than an humble speech, in which the pastor, Magister Claudius

Hedman, an old courtier, and aforetime curate of the church of St. Claire in Stockholm, had prepared himself for the occasion. Unhappy king! Those exuberant, bombastic speeches in verse and prose had persecuted him worse than gnats ever since he set foot on Finnish territory, and if he had had reason to dread any kind of difficulties on the journey, it was this. He was now on the way from Tavastwood, after a hot day, longing to get into harbor in tranquillity, and to get a chance to change the dusty traveling costume for the silk-lined dressing gown; and here another speech-maker had rained down from the cloudless heavens. Heavy crown! Why do you among your many thorns wear also the roses of eloquence?

“Although,”* said the speaker, “an inflammable genius brought forth beneath milder skies, and a more cultured head than can be expected of a cold north-land, ought justly, on this grand occasion, to be a translator of the exceeding joy which the most humble subjects of your royal majesty [a low bow] here assembled, of the clergy, cherish, I presume, in the deepest subjection, in the presence of your royal majesty [a new bow], I, the humblest clergyman, with the offering of devotion and submission of myself and my colleagues on the altar of your majesty’s grace, to come. (Bow at a right angle.)

“Great king!” continued the speaker, “permit, like an Alexander Magnus, a poor subject to present a cup of water instead of presents and gifts!”

“We thank you, sir provost; we should like that particularly well!” interposed the king, who would really far rather have received “a cup of water.” But

* The Surgeon seems here to have made use of a speech which curate Tunœus, in Anundsjo Angermanland, intended to deliver on his majesty’s progress, and which is found in the “Learned Journals” for the year 1752, No. 100. That the words of the esteemed Hedman were exactly the same, would indeed be too much to claim, but that in letter and spirit they pretty accurately corresponded with the first-named samples of pomp, of the humble eloquence of the time, is not improbable.

the speaker, not allowing himself to be daunted, continued, with incessantly repeated bows :

“Subjects have obtained leave to sacrifice to a tyrannical government—[here the prefect pulled the provost’s gown]—not alone all that they possessed, but also that which was dearest to them of all, I mean life. Your royal majesty loves neither”

“No, my good sir provost,” again interposed the king, as he wiped the sweat from his forehead.

“Therefore also these subjects in common, and especially we of the clergy, sacrifice ourselves to your royal majesty, as a precious anointed of the Lord, with our whole hearts.”

The king sighed—probably touched by so much zeal.

“Never,” continued the speaker, “never could an Orpheus tune his harp so well, that we might not, in a louder tone, voice our protestations of loyalty in the country’s numberless demonstrations of delight.”

“Would to Heaven that they really were *numberless*,” whispered his excellence Ekebladh in the ear of his neighbor, the doctor. But the speaker continued :

“A pagan Diogenes may well love the light of the sun more than the shadow of Alexander the Great. We rejoice not only in your royal majesty’s beams of grace, but request also the exalted privilege of enjoying, like children, in the tranquillity of peace, gracious protection under the wide-spread shadow of your royal majesty as the father of the land”

“No allusion to his majesty’s corpulence upon any account!” whispered the prefect, who observed that the king began to weary. The speaker indefatigably continued, however, as with a suitable bow he wished that his royal majesty, after the journey, might not only find himself in a state of health highly desirable to himself, “but also all the royal house, and especially our most beloved and gracious queen.” Comparing his royal majesty to the midnight sun at Torneå,

he said : " As surely as it is day, though sometimes the light of the sun is not visible and effective, so surely do we live in the indubitable hope that your royal majesty will never weary of causing your high favor and your most sublime, innate, royal grace to irradiate "

Crash! At that moment the rotten fence by the custom-house fell under the too great weight of the many spectators and auditors, who during the speech had climbed up in constantly increasing numbers to get a nearer view of the king, and now came to present themselves before his majesty in attitudes the most unusual and at variance with all etiquette.

" Is any one injured ? " instantly asked the good-hearted king, while the horses reared, and the police of the town, consisting of a fiscal, a town officer, and two watchmen, pressed forward in surprise to the place of the accident.

" It was only a little somerset, your majesty, " replied the student, Eric Ljung, who had been sitting highest on the fence, but had most dexterously got upon his feet again, and again stood with cap in hand, ready to hurrah, with his hand still smarting, and hoarse as he was, after having shouted by turns for Hats, Caps, and their majesties too.

" Why, that is my superb court-turner ! " exclaimed the king, who had forgotten the name, but immediately recognized the healthy, happy face.

" At your majesty's service, " replied the boy. In the court atmosphere he had learned this much about arranging his words.

" Come to me in the morning. I have something to say to you, " continued the king, kindly and unconstrainedly, and forgetting the whole ceremonious festivity.

Eric Ljung bowed, so that the long light forelock fell over his eyes.

" Since the town of Wasa thus has the inestimable

favor and happiness once more, after the lapse of a century and a half of beholding the sun . . . ” began the indefatigable speaker, who, on account of the long and fine introduction, had not yet arrived at his real subject.

“Zounds! That was a long dark spell!” whispered Ekebladh.

“The sun, I say, which with his life-giving beams illuminates the ancient Thule”

“Thanks! thanks!” said the king, interrupting him.

But the speaker could not possibly take it upon his conscience to let his majesty miss the rest of his long, memorized, sermon-like speech, and again began: “Since the sun is now rising in all its beauty above these northern regions”

“It is setting, my good sir provost, it is setting, and it is high time to go to rest,” once more interposed the unhappy monarch.

The prefect pulled the speaker’s coat.

“And,” continued the determined speaker, “since the stars lose their glow in its light, and the pleasant moon quenches her torch at the sight of Phœbus’ shining car”

“Drive on!” said the king.

The carriages set in motion, the fine speech was instantly drowned in the cheers of the crowd, and there stood the amazed speaker, without comprehending how his royal majesty had been able to miss such an excellent opportunity to hear a speech which, according to the opinion of the speaker, was not every day bestowed on even a reigning prince on his travels.

The greater share of the multitude hastened after the procession to Korsholm, to be in time, if possible, to see the king alight. Others, again, who had no inclination to compete in a foot race, gathered with much surprise around Eric Ljung, and must needs know what the king had said to him.

“That does not concern you,” said Eric, embarrassed.

“He called you his ‘superb court-turner.’ What could his majesty have meant by that?” asked an alderman, who had stood near the carriage.

“Did his majesty say *court-turner*?” inquired Eric, with assumed surprise.

“I heard it with my own ears,” protested the alderman.

“I thought he said *court-piecer*,” responded Eric.

“Piecer? Yes, so it was. Court-piecer! That was very singular. What could he have meant by it?”

“Well,” said Eric, with an air of importance, “I happened to live a few weeks with the master-tailor of the court, and as the king used to grow an inch or two stouter around the waist every month, his majesty used to call on us occasionally to get his royal dressing-gowns pieced out. That was why he called me his superb court-piecer.”

“But he bade you come to him in the morning!”

“Did he say that?”

“I had a good chance to hear it, for I was standing beside him.”

“Just so,—well, what else can it be but that he has grown a couple of inches stouter again from listening to long speeches, and so I am now to see him again to alter the dressing-gown?”

With these words Eric glided away.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AT THE RAMPARTS OF KORSHOLM.

IT was midnight, a July night in East Bothnia. That indescribable limpidity which spreads out over the summer nights of the north, and which has nothing

answering to it in all nature, lay gleaming over the little town, over fiords farther away, and over forest tops in the distance. A light smoke from the burning clearings floated here and there like a mist at the horizon, and sometimes the neighing of a horse, the tinkling of a sheep-bell, or the even oar-strokes from a late-returning fisher's boat, were heard.

In town, however, not everything was as inanimate as might have been supposed. These dwellers of the north have a wonderful ability, like the birds, to conform to light and darkness. The winter they sleep away, but in summer-time they hardly know when they sleep. Now, besides, the king was a guest in Wasa, and who indeed would at such a time waste his hours in sleep! Many people were astir, but as silently as though all were walking in their stocking-feet. If the monarch was not to be seen, they hoped still to get sight of some gold-laced lackey, and if they did not get that, they could perhaps stare at the royal carriages, or catch some news from the burgher soldiers of the guard, who were on duty at Korsholm. And if this too miscarried, there always remained the comfort of looking at the windows of the residence, figure out where the suite was quartered in the town, and, above all, make out which were the windows of the king's sleeping-room, in case some night-cap chanced to cast its shadow on the close-drawn curtains.

As the brightness of the summer night shines from the north, the southern side of Korsholm's ramparts lay in shadow. In the beginning, that shadow did not prevent objects from being distinguished; but after midnight, clouds arose and it became denser.

Near the rampart two men were talking together, whose features could not be discerned, though their voices were familiar. They were Benjamin Bertila, called Penna, and Captain Neptunus Gast.

"Are you sure of it?" said Penna.

"As sure as that I stand anchored here," said the

captain. "I logged every single word through the board partition of the play-house. They talked finely about their old love. The strange gentleman swore and protested that the young lady should be his wife, and it was to be cleared to-morrow, even if the old father was a roaring lion."

"Did he say that?"

"To be sure he said it. And when Miss Esther said something about being encumbered with a betrothed, the gentleman answered: 'I will sink your betrothed where neither sun nor moon will shine on him.'"

"What is the stranger's name?"

"The name is not in my log-book, but he bore the royal colors, that much is plain. That is why he is so proud, and intends in the morning to sail off with your bride."

"If he did not belong to the king's company, I"

"Of course—you are afraid. If he was a tar you would give him rudder-shot till the day of his death; but because he carries the royal Swedish flag you dare not even rinse the deck. It will be a comical story when all the people in Wasa are pointing their fingers at you and saying, 'See, there goes the poor fellow who ran aground when the count ran off with his bride!'"

"The count? Is he a count?"

"What do I know about it? He must be some sort of a titled fellow. There will be a fine song made about it in Storkyro:

"Näin, näin minä laiwan seilawan,
Kolme kreiwiä laiwalla."

Penna was silent—a proof that his blood was secretly boiling. It was dreadfully hard for him to work himself up to anger, but if he arrived at that point he knew no bounds. And he had now arrived at a great length. Ever since the forenoon he had

brooded over the same thoughts, and now they were near boiling over.

“You lie! You have proposed to Esther yourself, and that is why you are lying!” he muttered between his teeth, as he seized the captain firmly by the arm.

“I proposed to the girl’s money,” said Neptunus, “and after I heard that she gets nothing, I slipped my cable. Take her, for all me, and see how you can squeeze a penny’s ballast out of the father—the old miser! But it is true, I had very nearly forgotten that some one else was in command on board.”

“If I only had hold of that villain!” roared Penna, with clenched fist.

“I will tell you something,” whispered Gast. “An hour ago I heard the count’s lackey say to the guard, ‘My master is not in the habit of sleeping at night like other people. If he goes out pretend not to see him.’”

“The count? Again the count!”

“Well, baron then—it is all the same to me. But see there!—breakers ahead! There he is, coming over there on the rampart!”

At that moment the tall form of Bertelsköld was plainly defined against the night sky as he walked along the rampart. After the emotions of the previous day, Wasa had no rest to offer him. It had been a long time since he had seen a light summer night, and out here it was very refreshing and beautiful.

“How many centuries have sifted their snows on these ramparts!” said he to himself. “No one knows. Like a memory of childhood they go back into the past, and no one can say when or how they rose. They are baptismal brothers with christendom in these regions, and have once defended its cradle. It was by your side, old ramparts, that I first saw her whose memory I can never more efface from my whole life! To-day I stand here with my short recollection—yesterday another stood here, and to-morrow another will

take my place. We are all children of the hour, but you are of the centuries!"

"He is taking a short cut across the rampart to Larsson's play-house. He knows who is expecting him!" whispered the tempter to his neighbor.

Penna growled like a chained mastiff.

"If I were an old hussar I would know what I was about," continued the other.

But Penna no longer knew what he was about. He climbed madly up the rampart, and before Bertelsköld was aware of his presence, was standing behind him.

"I will show you the way to the play-house!" he muttered, as he hurled himself so violently upon his supposed enemy, that the count, utterly unprepared for such an attack, tumbled down from the rampart, which at this place was very steep.

A faint outcry was heard from below, and Penna was able to discern the fallen man, lying amidst a heap of broken rocks, which had probably been drawn thither in grading.

"Hurry and give him a crack as he lies there, so he won't tell tales out of school!" whispered Gast, who had stolen after him on the rampart.

But Penna stood motionless. His fury had vanished at the fall of his rival; he had a confused idea that in his passion he had committed a blunder, and his natural good nature began to assert its right.

Captain Gast on his part threw a sly glance at the windows of the residence. "It is not advisable to lie by," thought he. "The insolent gentleman down there has got paid for his scuffle this forenoon over on Brändö roadstead. Besides, he is suitor number one. I think the guard will dock suitor number two. Then comes father-in-law's turn. Gast is not yet the withered turnip-stalk for which they take him. If I am no longer afloat on the sea of fortune, I will show them that I am a hidden reef, and they shall be shipwrecked

on me. They shall get paid for everything, and have a good rent for the king's ring!"

With these plans for revenge, Captain Gast hastened away in the light night, without Penna's observing him.

"If you are a robber, take my purse, but help me out of here, for I cannot stir!" groaned Bertelsköld.

Penna listened. He fancied he knew that voice.

"Dunce!" said the injured man, in a low voice. "Do you not know that the king is sleeping a few steps from here? Do you want to compel me to wake the whole residence by shouting for help?"

Penna needed to hear no more. He made a spring, as though he had caught fire, and with one leap jumped down from the rampart, in the same direction that he had sent his rival. More fortunate than he, Penna arrived at the bottom tolerably sound, and did not even observe that he had sprained his foot, and got a couple of good sized bruises across the knees. Scarcely had he reached the spot before he threw himself upon the prostrate man, and began to cry vociferously.

"Scoundrel, will you shut your mouth!" whispered Bertelsköld, who could not imagine anything else than that he had fallen in with a lunatic, who might set the whole residence in commotion.

But Penna continued to howl, and it was with difficulty that the count could distinguish a few broken words: "My own master! my dear lord!"

The clouds had meantime cleared away, and the shadow fell less densely. To his great astonishment, Bertelsköld recognized his faithful old servant, whom he had not seen for twelve years. "Is that you, Istvan?" said he. "Have you got the nightmare, fellow, that you take it upon you to push me down from the rampart?"

"If I had known that it was you!" howled Penna, again sobbing aloud. "Cursed Gast! I am a dog—a

mad dog, that has bitten my master ! Dear, kind master, are you alive ? ”

“ Silence, rascal, and I will pardon you ! I have broken a leg, perhaps an arm, and am unable to stir. Carry me immediately to my room; it is in the wing of the residence, and the king’s body physician lodges in the room adjoining. But stop your howling, fellow, or else I will break your arms and legs when I get on my feet again. It must be understood that I fell by accident.”

Penna was half powerless with sorrow and terror. Nevertheless, as carefully as he was able, he lifted his beloved master in his paws of bear-like strength, and thus, with the most comical attempts to swallow his rebellious sobs, walked with his burden to the residence.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ERIC LJUNG IN THE KING’S KITCHEN.

ERIC LJUNG, with other male guests of the Larsson house, had been quartered in the spacious night room. Straw had been spread out over the floor, and on the straw lay eight boys and young men, each with his little woolen blanket over him. In the beds made fast to the wall, two and two above each other, lay eight older persons, on mattresses filled with tufts of rushes. There were down pillows in abundance for the more distinguished guests.

Eric slept with his mind full of the thought that in the morning he was to visit the king. It seemed remarkable to him, but why should he let it disturb his sleep ? He had had good exercise ever since early in the morning, and by reason of it slept so soundly

that one could, without hindrance from him, have sailed with the whole house to West Bothnia. "Wake me at three o'clock," he said to the old Sanna, who attended to the whole paraphernalia of the night room, and who, more than any one else, had the bird nature of sleeping in summer nobody knew when.

Scarcely had the watchman shouted at the corner, before Sanna, not without difficulty, sought out the favored young man in the heap of rushes and straw. "It is three o'clock," said she.

But Eric turned over on the other side, and did not allow himself to be disturbed.

"Will you get up?" said the old woman, shaking him by the legs.

Impossible to get life into the figure.

"The king is coming!"

Quick as an arrow, Eric was on his feet. His best clothes, his finest shirt, with starched collar and cuffs, and his father's silver hooks at the neck, were already in order.

For at least the twentieth time, his mother, who had not been able to sleep from anxiety as to the royal favor, asked him what the king could have to say to him, and for the twentieth time Eric protested that he could guess quite as little as she. "It cannot be bad, for he looked kind," said the boy, assuringly.

"You must not forget to call him 'your majesty,'" cautioned the mother. "Comb your hair in the hall before you go in, and dust your boots well. Do not speak before he questions you, and look him straight in the face. If he asks anything about your parents, tell him that your father served the crown of Sweden, when no one else in this country except Löfving and he had courage to do so. Let it be seen that you can afterward keep silence amidst the inquisitive court lackeys, and hurry right back home. Look out for your shirt collar, button your coat nicely, and do not stand with your hands in your pockets."

“Good bye! I have no more time now!” said Eric, and was already in the hall.

“God be with you, my child!” cried the anxious mother after him, and returned to her little girls, who, with no cares concerning the king, were asleep in the attic adjoining the night room.

It was four o'clock in the morning when Eric, armed with all these admonitions, arrived at the prefect's residence in Korsholm, not without fear that the king had possibly been waiting for him. To his surprise, he found everything except the guards in profound slumber, and when he wished to go in he was told to halt at the gate.

Now for the first time Eric recollected that such early rising was by no means customary at the court of Adolf Frederick.

“When is the gate opened?” he asked.

“Wait,” was the reply.

What should he do? He went out on the ramparts, and from the ramparts down on the meadow. The morning sun was shining brightly over the forest toward Weikar's, and the dew drops glittered on every blade of grass. The old love for plants and flowers awakened in Eric's breast, and little as there was to gain in the region examined a hundred times before, he set about botanizing around the ramparts. It was not long before all the happy Hammarby memories were once more awakened to life. “If I had Erica Lindelia here now,” thought he to himself, “we would examine this anthyllis with the archiater's magnifying glass. I wonder who helps her now to write names on the plant sticks, to press her specimens and explain Pliny! Charles does it—Charles Linnæus the little, in contradistinction to the great,” he added, with a sigh of regret, seasoned with a trifle of jealousy.

“It is well no one knows why I am named Ljung!” he then instantly thought. “If I should send Erica a *linnæa* from Wasa, pressed together with a fine speci-

men of *erica vulgaris*! That is what I will do. Both kinds are to be found on the pine hill not far from here."

To think was to act. Eric betook himself to the pine hill toward the Klemetsö side, and was soon so immersed in his botanical investigations that he forgot the king and all his mother's counsels. At last he heard the tower clock strike. He counted the strokes. It was eight o'clock!

"The king has been waiting for me!" was his first frightened thought. Untroubled about thicket and brushes, he started off on a run, and soon stood at the gate of the residence.

This time he got in. Everything was in lively motion. Adjutants and steward, cooks and servants, were running hither and thither, and the common council of the town of Wasa had humbly sent in an inquiry as to when his majesty would be pleased to grant them audience. But his majesty was not up—at least not yet dressed, and the interview with the council was arranged to take place at ten o'clock. With some difficulty, Eric found opportunity to speak, first to a *valet* and afterwards to chamberlain Baron Löwen, and inform them that his majesty had ordered him thither, and he was told to wait below until he was called.

Where should he go? Rooms and corridors, indeed the very garden, were filled with people. Eric placed himself in a nook in the kitchen.

This important part of the residence was for the present enlarged by one or two adjacent rooms, and there was active business in them all. Although the greater part of the suite were entertained outside in the town, the master-cooks and butlers had all they could do, for, besides the more immediate care of the breakfast, the officers and dignitaries of the town were invited to dinner. Every exertion was therefore being made for the improvement of the appearance

of the royal table, and everything best and freshest which seas, forests and dairies had to offer, was now gathered in kitchen and cellars, to be respectively examined, selected, and prepared.

Upon Eric's entrance, there was an uproar in the kitchen. A threatening internal war was just on the point of breaking out between kitchen-master Björck and master-cook Arelius. The cause was nothing less than that the last-named subordinate officer had had the unprecedented audacity to make a change in the conventionally confirmed and consequently irrevocable royal bill of fare. Björck produced indisputable proof that in that important document, countersigned by steward Åberg, there stood written in plain words, beside other products of the place: "Baked pike!" And yet Arelius had been presumptuous enough to want to prepare a stuffing for it!

As his reason, the master-cook alleged, not without a feeling of wounded dignity, that he had for twenty-five years served in the royal kitchen. The late King Frederick, who had a delicate taste and indisputable skill, had more than once praised his dishes of fish; and, as to baked pike, he believed himself, in that branch of the art, to be able to vie with the kitchen-master himself. "But," he continued, "I take the kingdom of Sweden to witness how suitable it would be for a royal table to present pike of five or six pounds baked! Instead of insulting my art, you ought to thank me, on your base knees, for having rescued the reputation of his royal majesty and the kingdom, and composed a dressing which can not do otherwise than win the highest admiration of connoisseurs!"

"I do not doubt the master-cook's marked skill in preparing fish dressing, which is used at all peasant weddings," responded the kitchen-master, somewhat contemptuously. "But as it can not be disputed that baked pike is ordered for dinner, it will probably be the master-cook's humble duty to conform to his

majesty's gracious direction. I must therefore enjoin upon the master-cook unconditionally to prepare the pike mentioned according to direction."

"But I can not pull pikes out of my eyes! There are no larger to be found in this wretched town, and the largest I have are already cut to pieces!" burst out the master-cook in desperation.

"That is the master-cook's business," said the kitchen-master, with the superiority of a chief. "The pike is to be served whole, even if it is not larger than a Hollandish herring."

"It may be the size of a roach, for all me," muttered the master-cook, as he rushed out to make one more search in all the fisher boats.

"What are you doing here? Why are you standing in the way?" asked the kitchen-master, authoritatively, of Eric Ljung.

"His majesty has kindly commanded me to wait for audience," replied Eric.

"That is another affair," responded the mighty man, in milder tones. "Sit down, if you can find a seat."

"Thank you, I will stand," said Eric.

Soon afterward the door opened, and with beaming face the master-cook entered, accompanied by an old fisherman, Lauri or Laurikain, our old acquaintance, who nowadays followed this occupation, and who carried a hideous thing on his back.

"What is that?" said the kitchen-master, crossly.

"It is a pike," replied the master-cook.

And a pike it was, but it might have been taken for a shark. It was so long that while the head gaped over the fellow's shoulder the tail dragged on the floor. That fish was never weighed with steelyards. They weighed it, and the scales indicated sixty-six pounds. Such a pike as that was well worthy to be set before a king. The honor of the town of Wasa and the Arelian glory of the master-cook were saved.

“Well, then clean and bake it, as suits you best, master-cook, but my people have no time to attend to it,” said the kitchen-master with vexation.

Arelius did not allow himself to receive this order twice. “Come on, somebody!” he cried, as with the fisherman’s help he dragged the monster out into the back yard, and laid it upon a board.

Eric Ljung had time enough, and went along. Never had he seen such a sea-wolf. Its mouth was large enough to swallow a mastiff, and the strong teeth and cloven tail showed that it had been in battle. Eleven hooks and a half-pound pike were found inside it when it was cleaned. For eleven times at least it had thus, during a lifetime which might be accounted not less than eighty years, mocked all wily attempts, till for the twelfth time it had encountered a hook and line, which had been too much for it.

But, besides the eleven hooks, one other object was found in the pike, an object which the master-cook let fall on the ground, without troubling himself concerning it. Eric picked it up and wiped it. It was a small, dimly shining, though tarnished ring.

“See!” said he to the master-cook. “There was a ring in the pike.”

The master-cook looked at it. “It is only a bit of copper,” said he, and threw it contemptuously away.

“Can I keep it?” inquired Eric.

“Make the best of it,” said the cook, laughing. “But where did you get this horrible pike, Lauri?”

“In Brändö Sound,” replied the fisherman.

CHAPTER XXX.

SUNSHINE THROUGH THE CLOUD.

WHILE Eric Ljung was so unexpectedly gaining possession of that "bit of copper" which master-cook Arelius regarded beneath his dignity to pick up from the ground, another broken thread of this story had quite as unexpectedly become united, a few steps from him.

In the wing of the residence building, three rooms were fitted up for the king's body physician, Doctor Petersen, and aide-de-camp Count Bertelsköld, whom his majesty wished to have near him. It was thus hither that the disconsolate Penna, or Istvan as he was formerly called, bore his wounded master in the night, after having made that mad mistake at the ramparts. The body physician was immediately wakened out of his sleep after the fatigues of travel, and could imagine nothing else than that his majesty had over-eaten of strawberries the previous evening, and that those strawberries were now threatening the tranquillity of the realm. As soon as he learned that merely a broken arm was involved, his Esculapian brow immediately cleared, and he proceeded with the hand of a connoisseur to examine the wounds.

Unfortunately, not only the right arm was found to be badly injured, but also the right leg was broken. The doctor was out of humor, and pronounced the case to be extremely complicated.

"So you do not think I shall be able to accompany his majesty on the journey?" inquired Bertelsköld in French.

"Journey?" growled the doctor. "Yes, you will

make a journey to another world, if you try to move a muscle in six weeks !”

“And then ?” asked Bertelsköld uneasily.

“It then depends on whether the arm is crippled, which is probable. I congratulate you on never again being obliged to fight a duel, my dear Count. As to the leg, it is not so dangerous ; I am provided with splints for the journey. You will only have to go on a crutch as long as you live.”

“A hopeful outlook !” groaned the count.

“Bah ! Take the matter coolly ! Happy man ! You bid the court go to the devil—I wish I might do the same ! You escape banging around the country, escape being murdered with cold cutlets, miserable wine, vapid small beer and interminable speeches. You will remove to your estates instead, and live there like a pasha, with fresh butter and a bowl of sour milk. Then if for the sake of change you should want to break your neck, you need only to throw away your crutch. But tell me, were you mad, or walking in your sleep, when you took into your head to undertake a *salto mortale* from the ramparts ?”

“I chanced unfortunately to slip on the dewy grass and slid off the embankment.”

“Who told you to go there ? As though a man were a mule—made to walk near precipices ! And what kind of a regimen do you follow ? Sleep when you ought to sleep, eat when you ought to eat, walk when you ought to walk—and *where* you ought to walk, and mind your p’s and q’s. The dressing is finished. I wish you a good night.”

With these words, the body-physician, yawning, went to resume his interrupted rest. In vain did Bertelsköld seek to indulge in the beneficent healing of sleep. His broken and now stiffly splintered joints pained him, and the northern summer night was too light for him.

“Istvan !” said he to his former servant, who,

grieved and repentant, had crept like a dog into a corner of the room.

Penna arose.

“What possessed you, my man, when you pushed me down from the embankment? Had any one put you up to it?”

Penna heaved a sigh which had a great resemblance to a certain four-footed animal's way of expressing itself, and in his fashion related the detail of his jealousy, which had begun in the play-house in Larsson's garden, had been strengthened by Esther's mockery, further inflamed by Captain Gast, and finally brought to such a length that he had lost all consideration. The story was interleaved in the most entertaining manner with new sobs and imprecations upon the tempter.

Bertelsköld had become more and more attentive. He began to think that the fellow was out of his wits. That this simple clown could be the man whom Esther Larsson had held up before him, the high-born, finely educated, who was ready to give up all the prejudices of his rank in order to elevate her as a wife by his side! Impossible! The mere thought of it was humiliation!

He tried to escape that troublesome thought, and with a hundred reasons prove to himself that Istvan, in joy over the king's arrival, had become tipsy. But it was not to be done. That thought gave him no rest. He asked questions;—Istvan's artless confessions corresponded only too well with Esther's own intimations.

This aggravated his condition. The inevitable fever set in toward morning, and he fell into delirium.

“Esther!” he exclaimed. “I want to talk with Esther Larsson!”

Penna caught up every sound, and was beside himself with terror. His beloved master was going to die,

and Penna had his death on his conscience. What was he to do?

The count continued to call for Esther. Although this was perfectly incomprehensible to Penna, he resolved to obey what he regarded as a command. He called in the count's *valet*, and early in the morning ran to the Larsson house, where he found Esther already arisen.

"My master is at the point of death, and wants to speak with you!" he exclaimed, with his heart in his throat.

"Your master?" inquired Esther, blanching.

"My master, Count Bertelsköld!" replied Penna.

Nothing more was required. A few minutes later, Esther, notwithstanding the unusual visit at such an hour, found herself with the wounded man at the residence.

He had been sleeping, and an hour's rest had somewhat revived his strength. Esther sat at the head of his bed, unconcerned as to the *valet's* wondering looks, and by means of Penna's disconnected whispers obtained an idea of how matters stood.

Then the count awoke, looked at her with a long, sorrowful gaze, and motioned to the two men to withdraw. He was alone with the beloved of his youth.

"Is it true," he asked, "what Istvan has told me? Is he the one who"

He was not able to proceed, but Esther softly answered: "It is my father's will."

"Your father's? Then not yours?"

"No."

The sick man drew a sigh of relief. "Forgive me," said he, "that I was for a moment able to doubt it! But is it decided? Is it decided?"

Esther did not reply.

"So it is decided," continued the count. "I would wish you happiness, but I cannot. What a life you will lead with that man!"

Esther was silent.

“You are a high-born woman. The high can never marry the low without sinking. And even though you should lift that man as high as is possible for him, you will nevertheless descend, yourself, and it gives me pain. I speak no more about my slighted love. I am a lost man, who has to choose between death and a crutch, so I can no longer offer you a broken arm, and a support which itself needs to be supported. But I conjure you, Esther, my precious friend, do not sink from that nobility which Providence has implanted in your soul! Rather go through life alone, or choose a more worthy one, one who at least understands you, one with whom you can sometimes exchange a thought higher than temporal cares, higher than that course of thought in which the slave toils for daily bread!”

Esther's eyes glistened. There was only one word which she comprehended, and which hastily grew to resolve in her energetic soul.

“A lost man?” she repeated. “Why so? No man is lost who has not been his own ruin!”

“A life on crutches, a solitary, joyless life, full of thoughts of what it *might* have been by your side—what do you think such a life worth?”

“Live for your children!”

“My children are young, and have no mother!”

“Seek and you will find one for them within your own rank!”

“Never. May my soul be as broken as my body now is, if I ever choose another wife than you.”

“Is that your fixed resolve?”

“Yes. And *you* question it!”

“Perhaps the day will come when you will be well again, and think otherwise.”

“During long years I have come to that resolution, and you still think it is only a caprice!”

“Well, then I will prove to you that you are not a lost man!”

“You? In what way?”

“I will become the mother of your children.”

“Great God! Is it possible that Fortune can still laugh at me from your lips? You will thus”

Esther’s eyes, at once warm with love and proud in the consciousness of her own motives, rested on the wounded nobleman. “Listen to me,” said she. “While I am still free, and before I humbly bow before a husband’s will, as a wife ought to do, it is necessary to speak frankly and freely, in order that now and henceforth we may understand each other.”

“Oh! say what you will, only do not take back your words!”

“You are a gentle, high minded, nobly thinking man, Count Bertelsköld, but you are weak.”

“In your presence—that is true.”

“You are weak as to many impressions, and as to the judgment of the world. The day will come when you will be reproached with having elevated the humble burgher-daughter to your side, and will be told that *she* was the one who labored to accomplish it. Let it be said!—I fear not for myself; I am above calumnies. But you have not steel enough in your will to go your own way, and follow your own conviction, untroubled as to what is said about it. That talk may some day disturb your tranquillity.”

“Never!”

“What is the ‘never’ of mankind? A second that fancies itself to be an eternity—nothing more! But, if you ever waver, remember that when you had everything to offer me I refused your hand, and it was when you called yourself ‘a lost man’ that I accepted it!”

“Should I ever forget it, you have a right to remind me of it.”

“No, my count, be assured I shall not do that. A wife ought not to look down on her husband, or con-

strain him by even a memory of the past. I say this to you for the last time, while I am still free. After you have raised me to be your equal, I shall be your servant, and will subject myself to everything a woman ought."

"Your hand, that you are mine!"

"Take it, in the name of God the Almighty!"

And she reached him her hand, which he kissed. That hand-pressure was their betrothal, immovable as if it had been sealed with a thousand witnesses.

"Now I shall get well again with joy," whispered the wounded man, with tearful eyes.

"Yes, you shall get well with joy, and be cured by a better medicine than even the king's body physician can offer you," answered Esther Larsson, warmly.

"Say that again! It is long since I have heard words so sweet. They shall be my medicine, and you yourself my physician."

"The one will not thwart the other. I know a doctor better than the king's—or rather a doctress."

"It cannot be any other than you."

"Who knows? But now we are to make ready to blast a rock."

"You think, then, that the king"

"The king is a mountain painted on canvas; but I know one of granite, and that is my father."

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE HUSSAR, THE STUDENT, AND THE BURGHER KING.

THE waiting became too tedious for young blood. Eric Ljung, with his bit of copper in his pocket, went to the great stairway to wait for his majesty's commands.

His uncle Penna was standing there, dark as a winter-night. By what strange providence the man's perceptions had suddenly brightened—whether he had been bold enough to listen, or a lucid moment had come to bring his dull ideas into order—can never absolutely be known. Certain it was that he now comprehended why Esther Larsson had been called to the residence, and why she had been so willing to obey that call, and why Penna himself had been turned out. But what Penna was not at all clear about was what he now ought to do. Jealous as a Corsican—which is nothing unusual in these regions of the country—and after so solemn a betrothal, the good fellow had some difficulty in comprehending himself so ignominiously discarded. For forty years he had been gathering fuel for one single passion, the first in his whole life, and now a puff of wind had blown it into flame. The very granite may burst with heat; even the wet morass can be scorched by the forest fire; and could Penna be cold when he had at last begun to boil?

But again, when it occurred to him that the robber of his happiness was no other than his former lord and master—the only human being for whom he had hitherto cherished an unbounded attachment—the same master who had once rescued him out of Turkish captivity, and whom he had lately rewarded with the breaking of arm and leg, the chill of a hailstorm fell on the glowing embers of jealousy. Penna felt as though he would like to kill the whole world, his master excepted, and then jump into the nearest well.

In this mood Eric Ljung found him. There was old friendship between them, and in Eric's childhood Penna had resolved on adopting his nephew as heir of Bertila farm, when the determination that Eric should become a scholar annihilated all those plans.

“What are you staring at so, uncle?” said the boy, gaily.

In the parlance of the place, to “stare” meant

either to look greatly astonished or very meditative. Penna was really "staring."

"It is not worth while to be low-spirited now, while the king is here," continued Eric. "The king knows a cure for everything, and I am going to see the king," added the boy, as he straightened up six inches taller.

"Are you going to see the king?" inquired Penna.

"To be sure I am; he commanded me to, himself," replied Eric.

Penna was not wont to be troubled by bright ideas, but this time he was off the hinges, and was no longer himself. He had an idea.

"If you meet the king," said he, "ask if I can enter service as hussar."

"You want to be a hussar, uncle!" exclaimed Eric, with undisguised astonishment.

"What of it? I have been one before," responded Penna.

"But there are fifty years on your shoulders now, uncle."

"That is nothing. I think I can keep in the saddle yet, and my old saber hangs over my bed."

"Then who is to manage Bertila farm?"

"It can manage itself."

"But why have you taken this fancy?"

"That concerns nobody. I will not be a dog any longer. I want to die a soldier."

"But we are living in the most profound peace."

"No matter. I want to fight. There will probably be war some time."

"The king cannot make war to get you a chance to fight, uncle."

Penna could not dispute that that was hardly probable.

"But it is all the same," said he. "I cannot live any longer, and so I want to die as I have lived, with my saber in my hand."

At these words two great tears trickled down his brown cheeks. Eric's kind heart was touched.

"What is lying so heavily on your heart, uncle?" he inquired.

"You will not understand it. But then," he added after a while, "you may as well be the first as the last to hear it. It was not I who proposed to my cousin Esther, it was her father, the representative himself, who forced her upon me."

"And now does she not want you, uncle?"

"Now he has come here, as you know"

"Who has come here?"

"My old master, the cavalry captain—Bertelsköld. Of course it is clear as the sun."

"I understand nothing."

"When I think of her having been his sweetheart,—and their meeting in the play-house—and how I pushed him off the embankment—and made him a cripple for all his life—and that I am thrown on the dirt heap, like a worn-out broom—and that he can say to me: 'There is the sea, jump into it!' or: 'There is the Turk, get into a lively skirmish, and let him spear you like a herring!—for if it had not been for me what would you have been at this time more than a miserable slave in Adrianople?' Of course it is clear as the sun that I must die, and so I want to be a hus-sar."

"Tell me how it is!" said Eric, who felt a sincere sympathy for the unhappy man, and drew him to a corner of the hall, where they were less disturbed by the commotion of the crowd. Eric was too sagacious not already to have guessed, from his mother's vague words, and from Bertelsköld's many questions about Esther at Drottningholm, more than had been supposed, but from his uncle's confused talk he could only guess that something unusual had occurred. It was not long before he had found out the real state of things. Count Bertelsköld, Esther, his uncle, all those

persons most interested in the matter, lay near his heart. What a pleasure, what happiness, to be able to do something for all those dear persons! With Eric, that thought suddenly grew to a resolve, and we will perhaps do him no injustice if we guess that it also flattered his youthful vanity too much not to gain an increased strength by it.

But how should he, a poor student, be able with his weak arm to encroach on the ordained course of events?

A thought occurred to him.

"I know!" he exclaimed in a triumphant tone. "One who has not asked for a gift can the more easily give it back. Go immediately, go before any one finds out how it is, to father representative, and tell him that you have been thinking the matter over, uncle, and that you do not want to marry. In that way you will get out of the affair honorably."

Penna, pursuant to his nature, began to muse.

At that moment a *valet* came pushing every one out of the way like a snow-plow, and announced that his majesty was, in his own high person, about to inform himself of Count Bertelsköld's condition.

Esther Larsson had scarcely got out of the wounded man's room, Penna had scarcely faced about, and Eric Ljung had with much ado got his cap in his fist, when the king, accompanied by Baron Löwen, passed by. His majesty was still in morning costume, and looked as like a good-natured burgher as an alderman of Wasa before the clock of the council chamber rings nine on Monday morning.

"Wait up there!" said he, with a nod to Eric. At that moment, the door was opened and closed again by the *valet*.

Instead of following his majesty, or watching the student's unwonted steps up the court stairs, we will follow Esther Larsson's fleet steps as she hastened home, without heeding Penna, who, with hanging head

and slow footsteps, lumbered along in the same direction.

The old burgher king was sitting in his room, with paper and seals before him on the writing-table, when his daughter entered. She stepped forward and kissed his hand, upon which he laid it on her head in blessing. That was the customary morning greeting, which was never neglected. But it was with unusual warmth to-day, that Esther pressed her kiss on the withered hand.

“Where have you been? I have been expecting you two hours already!” grumbled the father, with his extreme punctiliousness, and his custom of seeing his daughter, by six o’clock at latest, bring his morning drink, which consisted of a glass of an equal mixture of small beer and milk.

The question was simple, but courage was needed to answer it. And all Esther’s courage sunk, when she saw that beloved old father more withered and aged than she thought she had ever seen him before. She had felt his hand tremble on her head,—how was it possible that she could be the means of one more sorrow for him, in the evening of his life!

But to speak the truth was the first precept she had learned in her tender childhood, and Esther Larsson could not lie. With trembling voice, therefore, she replied: “I have been visiting a sick person.”

“You might have chosen a different time,” said the father. “While you were forgetting me, I have been thinking about you. See here: I have been going through my will again, and added to your account six milch cows besides the first. I can go hence calmly; you will be provided for.”

“My father!”

“You will be provided for. You will not go empty-handed from your father’s house, and you are going to a wealthy home, which by your care will double its wealth. Do not interrupt me. I know what you wish

to say. Wealth is not everything, but still it is a great deal in this world. Wealth makes one independent, and gives him power to do good to others. Use it well and discreetly, and it will make you happy. It will depend upon yourself, for you will be the manager. Your husband is an honest man, and that is sufficient. That he is below you in intelligence and learning, a good wife will never regret, for that is to the advantage of both."

"Pardon me, my father, but every time I have seen a couple married I have always heard the clergyman say, the wife shall be subject to her husband, as Sarah called her husband Abraham master. You yourself would never have bowed beneath the will of a woman."

"That is true, but it depends on how Heaven has dispensed the gifts. For a simple man with a simple wife, everything goes at loose ends. One of them must think for the other, and if this has fallen to the lot of the wife, in God's name let her follow her calling."

"But that is contrary to Scripture. And how is such a wife to be able to love, revere, and esteem her husband?"

"In this world one does not always esteem that which is wise, but that which is just. A good man may have received an insignificant endowment of common sense, and still be estimable. For the rest, it is a decided affair, as concerns you, and necessary for the family, for our inheritance must not be dissipated. You will some time understand that I looked out for your welfare."

That decisive tone awoke Esther's broken opposition to life. To be sold for the good of the family, to be given away without even being asked about it,—that was altogether too much!

"Forgive me, my father," she again began, "the clergyman has not yet read the vow that binds me. I

am still a free being. I can change a determination which was never my own."

"Change a determination! What kind of caprice is this? When has one of our family ever retracted a pledge?"

"Listen to me, my father, and do not judge me too harshly! When I bowed before your will, I did not know that he, by whom I believed myself deceived and forgotten, was the same day to return to Wasa to ask my hand for the second time."

"I could believe that. Well, and you were immediately ready to believe the betrayer, ready to forget your wrong, and balk your old father behind his back? You courtesied and thanked him most humbly, I suppose?"

"No. I answered as became my father's daughter. I refused his offer."

"Good! And I said to him when I flung the king's devilish ring into the depth of the sea, 'So surely as that ring shall never more behold the light of day, so surely shall no connection ever take place between the Larssons and Bertelskölds until the end of time.'"

"You have done wrong, father, to wish to bind the course of Providence. A union will take place between those whom you have regarded as forever separated."

"Girl! Do not repeat those words!"

"Father, relent! I have been obedient to your will as long as it was in human power. I have refused the hand of the only man whom I have ever loved or shall love. When he was prosperous and strong I thrust him back; but when he lay unhappy, powerless, injured to the point of death, when he called himself a lost man, and when I felt the clear conviction that without me he was lost, but that I could restore him to life, health and happiness,—then I could no longer refuse, and—forgive me, father!—then I reached him my hand!"

“You promised him”

“To be his wife. Yes, father. I promised him that, and I mean to keep my word.”

CHAPTER XXXII.

AN ANIMAL-TAMER.

ANYONE who knew Esther Larsson knew also that she had inherited not a little of her father's iron will. But there is steel which cuts iron, and twice before had the father's will cut off the daughter's will in the most important questions of a woman's life and happiness. The old burgher king was convinced that his royal word was for the third time also to cast all opposition at his feet. But this time he was mistaken.

“And you would become a Countess Bertelsköld!” said he, coldly, almost contemptuously.

“Yes, father.”

“Wean yourself then from that fine title. You will never wear it.”

“Once more, my father, I entreat you, I implore you on my knees,” and with that Esther threw herself down and kissed his hand, “give your consent! You know how dearly I have bought it, how I have obeyed your command, although it nearly broke my heart. I am your daughter, father. I shall never cease to love and obey you and to revere your will; only do not refuse me your consent in this one thing on which hangs my whole life! I know you believe yourself to be acting for my weal, when you wish to bind me to another husband. That is impossible, father! I beg you do not make your daughter so infinitely unhappy. What have I to give another man? A broken soul, a crushed heart, coldness instead of love, aversion instead

of esteem. And if my own happiness were not at stake, would that be acting justly toward an honest man?"

Larsson deliberated—not with his heart, but with his judgment. He was a shrewd merchant; would it be advisable to concede anything in the transaction? No, one could not abate a shilling here without losing the whole affair. He let his daughter remain on her knees.

"I know all about that," said he calmly. "All girls reason like you. If they cannot have this or that one they become infinitely unhappy. But that infinite unhappiness extends no further than to the threshold of that husband which a sensible father has chosen for them. They melt into tears, of course, like butter in the sunshine; but when they are tired of melting they cool down, and begin to take the matter practically. You, my daughter, will not be an exception. The first week at Bertila your husband will perhaps see sullen looks. The next week you will have so much to do that you will forget your silly tears, and the third week you will shine like the sun over a ripened rye-field. Believe me, my child, the best thing you can do is to hang your youthful fancies on the peg in the lumber-room, just as the proud eagle with outstretched wings is nailed above a common stable door."

"And that is all that you have to answer me, father, when I beg you on my knees for my life's happiness?" exclaimed Esther, painfully.

"Yes," said the father. "I answer you as any wise father is obliged to answer, from consideration for the good of his child."

Esther arose.

"Then hear my answer also," said she, "and be assured, my father, that it cannot be shaken, for I am no longer a child who throws away one plaything to choose another. I *cannot* marry my cousin—we are so widely different in everything that makes a bond be-

tween husband and wife enduring, that I can never love him as it would be my duty to do. Neither *can* I retract my promise to Count Bertelsköld. I might be able to do so if my happiness alone was at stake, but when I know that his happiness depends on that above all else, I can not. For that reason I break the bond between Penna and me. For that reason I *will* be Bertelsköld's wife !”

“That shall not be, no, that shall not be, so long as I live !” exclaimed the father, now suddenly passionate. “And after my death your brother Lars is the one who will decide for you.”

“*You*, I have implored upon my knees; but I do not intend to become a beggar of my brother. Take my life—it belongs to you—but my love you shall neither sell nor kill !”

“Stubborn child ! Then do you wish me even to curse you ?”

“Oh ! my father ! Have I done anything but entreat for your blessing ?”

“And you do that at the same time that you openly defy your father's command. Once more: Will you marry your cousin, and forever renounce your foolish fancy for that haughty nobleman ?”

“No !”

“No ?—Degenerate daughter of a man who, his whole life through, has fought for the cause of the people ! Unworthy nobility-doll—unworthy to bear your father's honest burgher name ! Do as you will, scorn your old father, and trample his bidding under foot, but also take his curse with you on your sinful path, for food on the journey ! May the showy sign under which you wish to conceal our honest name, for which you blush, some time fall and crush your wretched vanity !”

“That is poor food for the journey !” said a well-known voice, and in the door stood Penna, with a countenance half way between sourkrout and teasels.

His doleful mien, his pert manner, his unusual loquacity, and his uncertain bearing, all indicated that the ordinarily sober man had now made an uncommon slip from his orderly habits.

“You come in the nick of time,” said Larsson, in a quickly changed tone. “In an hour I am going with the burghers to the king. His majesty’s consent to the wedding, on account of your being cousins, will be made out this afternoon. On Sunday the bans will be published all three times, and on Tuesday the wedding will take place.”

“There is no great hurry about that,” replied Penna. “I, too, have a word in the matter. To speak plainly, father representative, I think it is unnecessary to trouble the king about a wedding that is not going to take place.”

“What now? Has everybody lost his wits to-day?”

“Say rather that I have become a trifle wiser since yesterday. A trifle thinner and a glass fatter. Do you believe that I care anything about your daughter? No, no more than about the shoe my horse lost twenty years ago, on the steppe of Debreczin.”

“Fellow, you have drunk the king’s health one glass too much.”

“Two, if you like; yes, four,—I make no ceremony about that. There is an ale-house on the road from the residence. I have been a dog, and allowed myself to be whipped like a dog, and to be fooled like a dog,—and when Gast set me on I gave chase. But now I mean to drink myself to death—it is all the same to me. Keep the girl, and marry her to the count in luxury. I will hold the canopy, and dance at the wedding.”

“Are you not ashamed to show yourself before my eyes in such a condition? Go away and lie down and sleep.”

“I am going to do that; I am going to sleep in the ale-house, and dream that I am quartered. See here

now, father-in-law,—you know you wanted to be my father-in-law,—I will tell you something. You thought to force your girl upon me, because you knew she had a fancy for gold on the collar. But you see Penna was too sharp for you, and happened to see where a gentleman's foot had tramped in the sand walk by the play-house. Let him tramp there for all me, — it was *my* master, and any one who says a bad word about the heel of his boot will have me to deal with. But put a bridle on the girl, and hold the reins short. Never mind about Bertila farm. If you do not get it in that way, you will get it after I have slept in the ale-house. Life will be gay here, and you will make money. How much is an honest fellow's happiness worth, and what do you pay for a human soul?"

Larsson opened the door and called his servants. But Penna was by this time in his savage mood.

"Do not call your life-guard for help," said he, "for as truly as you gave me yesterday that ax, which hangs there, I have a mind now to try what it is good for. See how angrily he is staring at me—the wrinkled old dealer in men! It is funny, yes, by St. Steven, as the Magyars say, it is funny to see how out of countenance he is now—the old bloodsucker!—because for once I was too shrewd to bite at the hook! What did you do with my father whom you allowed to run all over the world,—with my brothers whom you let the Cossacks chop to pieces,—with my sisters whom you defrauded of their inheritance,—with Bertila farm, which you wanted to rob from my father's son? Dealer in human beings that you are, what have you done with my family?"

He seized the ax, and swung it savagely. More and more madly rolled the eyes of the drunken man, the more those long-germinating ideas, which we know were in a great measure unjust, obtained power over him, and the more he worked himself up to a fury

which was so extremely unusual for his phlegmatic temperament.

The old man heard the ax whistle close to his head. He drew back without changing a feature. Then Esther threw herself between them. She seized the weaponed hand firmly in her own; she looked the drunken man steadily in the eye, and said deliberately: "Go and lie down in the night-room."

Penna stared at her, and tried to pull his arm free, but was unable. That deep, calm and firm look penetrated even the fogs of intoxication, and tamed him.

"Must I go?" he repeated.

"Yes, you must go," replied Esther, as she pushed him gently ahead of her. He made no resistance. The stronger soul had conquered his.

A few minutes later he had sunk into profound slumber. Then Esther silently returned to the old man. "My father!" said she, "it was to that man that you wished to entrust your daughter!"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ERIC LJUNG AND THE KING.

WHILE to the old representative the domestic concerns of the Larsson house were taking an unexpected turn, Eric Ljung, the student, trotted undauntedly up the stairs of Korsholm's gubernatorial mansion. His lot at first was to wait in the large room, among illustrious gentlemen of the king's suite, while the hall was filled with a crowd of supplicants, consisting of disabled old soldiers from the great war, poor peasants who were hard pressed for crown arrears, sailors who had frozen their toes, and old women, who

with rare powers of speech had prepared to lay their troubles and complaints in the fatherly lap of the majesty of the realm. All these had regarded with visible envy the happy one who was let in, while they were turned back by the guard, and the most voluble old woman in the crowd shouted after him: "Tell the king that I am waiting here!"

The little court in the large room had observed with scarcely less astonishment the remarkable audience of the student. Various little attempts to sound his secret miscarried. The prefect himself in passing let a question in that direction escape him. Eric replied that his majesty had summoned him.

"Is it concerning a pension for your mother?"

"I do not know."

"What is it about?"

"I do not know."

"Have you asked for audience?"

"No, your grace."

Prefect Piper was a veteran of sixty years, who had been taken prisoner at the Dnieper when seventeen years of age, and, after spending six years in Russia, had been exchanged. As during Horn's administration he had long been neglected, he was on that account a zealous Hat, and had rapidly risen when the Hats came into power. In 1746 he had received from the ruling party the commission, as prefect of East Bothnia, of keeping that unquiet province in check.

The East Bothnians were strongly inclined toward the Cap party, both on account of the disagreeable memories of 1742 and 1743, and from a natural antipathy to the South-Finnish nobility, which consisted for the greater part of decided Hats. The burghers of the towns, with Wasa at the head, continued also to lean toward the side of the Caps, and in Wasa, the old Cap leader, Larsson, notwithstanding his great age, was still, as ever, a dangerous opponent to the omnipotent Hats.

The prefect had thus every reason for a certain fear that the king might hear things in Wasa which were not altogether favorable to the administration of the Hats. He expected no good from the impending audience of the burghers, and found it necessary to guard the two ears of his majesty as carefully as possible. He probably also knew—as people know everything in a small town—the relationship of Eric Ljung to the old burgher king, and imagined that the boy might be made use of as the instrument of heaven knows what secret cabals.

“Did Representative Larsson send you here?” he asked, fixing his eyes sternly on the boy.

“No,” said Eric.

“After you have had audience, come immediately to me,” said the prefect, in a commanding tone.

Eric bowed and was silent.

A few minutes afterward his majesty returned, and a quarter of an hour later Eric received orders to enter the king’s bedroom. The student-heart beat hard under the blue jacket. “What can he want of me?” asked Eric of himself for as much as the twentieth time.

The door opened, the *valet* remained outside, and Eric found himself in the center of the realm, or, to speak in the style of the court poets, face to face with “the sun.”

That sun of the north and “Alexander Magnus” sat, or rather half reclined, for the present on a sofa. He was clad in a yellow silk dressing-gown, morning-boots, and morning-wig, which was considerably smaller and lighter than the heavy and immense peruke of state. In the nearest arm-chair sat Petersen the body-physician, the only person who was now with his majesty. That no great indisposition called for his presence at this time was plainly shown by the cheerful countenance of the king. The shrewd doctor, who very well comprehended that a majesty in ordinarily

good health ought to be fed with other prescriptions than those of a majesty with the gout, had probably just been telling some piquant anecdote, for upon Eric's entrance Adolf Frederick still wore a smile on his lips, as he said:

“*Verfluchte Geschichten! Ist der Kerl denn geradezu toll?* But you are going to lose your patient, my dear doctor!”

The body-physician departed, and Ljung stood alone in “the sunshine.”

“Come nearer,” said the king to the student, who with the most graceful bow at his command was scraping the mat by the door.

Eric moved his legs as well as they would allow, a few steps forward.

“What is your name?”

“Eric Ljung.”

The king glanced through a letter which he took out of his portfolio.

“Ljung!” he repeated. “Can it be I have been mistaken?”

“My father's name was Pehrson,” replied Eric, not without perplexity.

“Pehrson? That is right. You are a journeyman turner?”

Eric humbly stated that he had been a student at Strengnäs.

“But you can turn?”

“I have learned a little about it of my father.”

“It was you, who—let's see, at Ulrichsdal?—Yes; and then at Drottningholm? You turned buttons?”

Eric bowed.

“Not bad You have talent. Something might be made of you. You might be sent to Hanover or Brunswick to learn the art. It is a beautiful art.”

And at this King Adolf Frederick drew a deep sigh. There were moments when the wheel of a traveling carriage, not to speak of the revolving wheel of

fortune, seemed to him both less agreeable and less trustworthy than the wheel of a turning-lathe.

Eric respectfully objected that he hoped in autumn to enter the university.

The good king's countenance clouded. "I know," said he, "Count Tessin recommends you. How long have you been known to Count Tessin?"

"I did not have the honor of being known by his excellence before I delivered a letter to him at Ulrichsdal."

"Young man, you have allowed yourself to be misled into a dangerous path, and nothing but an honest confession can save you. You can attribute it to my favor and your youth that you escape the rose-chamber. There are those who have thought it a pretty good remedy. But there is something about you that pleases me, and I want to hear what you have to say in your defence."

Eric shuddered. In childhood he had heard his mother speak of the "rose-chamber,"—that ill-famed dungeon in Stockholm where prisoners used to be tortured to confession.

The king continued: "From whom was the letter to Count Tessin?"

"From the archiater, Linnæus."

"Linnæus? What does that mean? Have you proof of that?"

Fortunately Eric had with him the letter from Erica Lindelia, in which among other things she related that the archiater had had a letter from Count Tessin, who promised to hold Eric in remembrance for a royal stipend. Blushing, Eric took out that letter.

The king read it with brightening countenance. "Is this all you have had to do with Count Tessin?"

"All, your majesty."

"But your kalabalik with the crown prince? And your disguise at Drottningholm?"

Eric briefly related what the reader already knows.

His majesty brightened more and more, and finally burst out into a more than gracious laugh.

“That is just what I said!” exclaimed he merrily. “But they were determined to have you a traitor. I will give you a piece of advice, my poor boy. Look out for women;—they can never forgive those who have once wounded their vanity. And above all, look out for *danseux* at a royal ballet, for those ladies pirouette with whispers in the cabinets just as dexterously as with *pas de deux* in the theater. *Sacre nom!* if I had not stood up for you they would have made you a couple of inches longer or shorter in the rose-chamber, and that would have been a pity for a young man of such eminent talents for turning. Go to Åbo, however, and on our arrival we will be pleased to see what we can do for you. There ought to be a stipend to spare by autumn.”

Eric took this for an invitation to go, and with the utmost deference bowed, according to all the principal rules of the art.

“Wait,” said his majesty. “I remember that Count Bertelsköld also interested himself in you. Do you know Count Bertelsköld?”

Eric gratefully told of the count’s kindness to him.

“Do you also know a former Representative Larsson here in Wasa who is called the burgher king?”

“Very well, your majesty.”

“He is said to have a daughter. What kind of a person is she?”

This was the first time Eric had had to give testimony of that nature, but he replied as best his embarrassment would allow him. “She is a very fine girl.”

“Stupid stories,” muttered the king, half laughing, half vexed. Eric perceived that his majesty had been informed of the count’s singular passion, and his heart palpitated, for he expected more questions.

But as his majesty did not continue, Eric conceived a desperate idea. "Now or never," thought he.

"Your majesty," he made bold to say, "Count Bertelsköld wants to marry Esther Larsson."

The king smiled. "So it is said," replied he.

"He can never get a better countess," assured Eric, whose courage was increased by the royal smile. "She was educated like a lady in Stockholm, and no lady has a better heart."

"I perceive," said the king, amused by the conversation, "that she has a good advocate to-day. What hinders her becoming a countess?"

"Her father."

"He does not desire it? Why, that is excellent!"

"He is too proud for that."

"How? Too proud to let his daughter become a countess!"

"Yes. He considers a burgher just as good as a count, and sometimes better."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

AUDIENCES WITH THE KING.

"OUR particularly esteemed *cousin of the house of Wasa* has a peculiar policy of his own," responded the king, laughing at his wit. "A burgher king ought also to be sovereign of his realm, but must not encourage rebels. Miss Larsson ought not to condescend to become countess. Our great Linnæus would say, 'An Apollo will not develope from a cabbage worm.'"

"If your majesty would be so gracious as to speak a word, everything would be well," said Eric frankly.

“It would not be the first time a royal word had set everything right that was awry in our family.”

“Indeed!” said the king, to whom that freedom of speech must have seemed new and agreeable after all the obsequious verbosity which during the journey had afflicted his ears. “That must have been during King Orre’s reign.”

“The late king and Queen Ulrica Eleonora brought about my parents’ wedding, and it took place in the palace of Stockholm,” responded Eric, without losing courage. “If your majesty will be so gracious”

“As to follow the example? Apply to the queen, my boy; she is more skillful in those affairs of government, although I doubt whether she would have an inclination this time to play Providence for the lovers. But tell me about the royal word as to your parents?”

Eric related what he knew of that event, and did not forget his mother’s charge to mention the services of his father. The king heard him with the most gracious attention, and then said:

“Tell your mother to hand in her papers this afternoon to the chamberlain, Baron Löwen, and I will see what can be done for her. That will be *our* matter. The widow of a brave soldier must not suffer need. The other does not concern me.”

“Your majesty does not know how it is,” resumed Eric persistently, and then described in his way how Count Bertelsköld had become a cripple on account of the revenge of a rival.

The king shook his head, and showed signs of impatience. The hour had arrived when the burghers were to have audience.

Eric, however, was not at all inclined to let go his hold, and now proceeded with an argument which he had prudently put in his pocket when he started from home. “Your majesty was so gracious as to promise

to grant me a request the first time I should show you something," said he, with a blush.

"What is it?"

"It is a box which your majesty was so gracious as to give me," replied Eric, presenting the box.

"I remember that," said the king, with a smile, "but I have already granted you two favors."

"One more, your majesty, and it will be an even three,—and all good things are in threes!" said the boy boldly. "Give Esther Larsson to Count Bertelsköld, and your majesty will be blessed by three good people!"

"I do not doubt that, for I have been very often assured of it," rejoined the king. "And I observe that you have talents to turn small intrigues with the same success as buttons. Go,—I will see what I can do."

Eric was not so inexperienced that he did not understand how little hope was to be expected from this issue. He bowed most deferentially, and asked if his majesty would allow him to repeat to the prefect his majesty's gracious words.

"What have you to do with the prefect?" asked the king, with a frown.

"His excellence appeared anxious to find out what your majesty was pleased to say to me, and has commanded me to appear before him after the audience."

"What is the meaning of that?"

"I cannot presume to guess," shrewdly replied Eric, "but I suppose that not everything which is said here in Wasa must come to the ears of our gracious king."

"Boy! you are shrewder than you have leave to be. What is said here in Wasa?"

"If your majesty will not take it unkindly"

"Speak. You have my permission."

"It is said that the prefect is working for a party which is called"

“I know, I know. Well, what is said about the administration of the Hats?”

“It is said that the Hats deceive his majesty, that the country is discontented, and that trade will be destroyed if matters continue long as they have gone.”

“Ah!” growled Adolf Frederick, with a sigh. “I understand. My good Piper also wishes to teach me how to govern my kingdom. But what do the people say about me?”

“They say that your majesty would make the country happy and rich if your majesty could have his own way,” replied Eric.

“That is good.—Go and answer the prefect that I have granted your mother a pension,” said the king, with a gloomy look.

Eric departed. “I wonder what that last remark meant!” said he to himself.

But it was some minutes yet before King Adolf rang for his *valet*. “Everywhere those cursed ambitious Hats!” said he thoughtfully. “When will the day come when the wish of the good people shall be fulfilled, and I myself have an opportunity to attend to their happiness? Patience, my lords, counts, and prefects, the day is perhaps nearer than you think! Meantime it is necessary to assure ourselves of the support of the Caps. Larsson is said to be their leader in the town council.—It may do.—Let’s see. My good wife—but then am I always to be the plaything of caprices? It will be superb;—the princess of Wasa may condescend to become countess.”

The king rung, and the *valet* entered.

“The burghers can have audience!”

A few minutes later his majesty, surrounded by his suite, which was more splendid than the king himself, was pleased to give admission to the body of burgo-masters and aldermen, and the citizens of Wasa. The whole room, which was only twenty-four feet square,

and barely eleven and a half feet high, was full of the shadow of royalty and the humility of the people.

To the loss of posterity, the exact chronicle of that important event, as also of the king's whole sojourn in Wasa, has been lost, so that the reader unfortunately is also bereft of those obsequious speeches and all those sighs which humility and zeal, in connection with real necessity, on that occasion may have blown forth from the official lungs of the town, provided with lawful authority. It is related—with what historic certainty we will not decide—that the gray-haired, bent but still tall and imposing figure of Representative Larsson above others attracted the attention of King Adolf Frederick; that the king, with the most gracious patience, gave ear to renewed humble wishes that the town might receive staple freedom;—that old Larsson had warmly, eloquently and boldly sustained this request, which constituted the object of his life as a citizen, and that the king had promised, with the free consent of the estates of the realm, to take the matter under mature deliberation. It is also known that the Hats tenaciously opposed that reasonable wish—a sufficient cause for the East Bothnian towns to detest that government!—and that it was not until after the Caps had come to the helm of state, that Wasa with other Finnish towns obtained that longed-for justice, in the year 1765, but that Larsson was then permitted to see the fulfillment of his dearest wish.

It is also said that during the audience Prefect Piper was all ears; but, enough of a courtier not to read the king's features, he refrained from any interference, and merely noted in his memory all that he regarded as secret plots against his party, and among them the singular circumstance that his majesty had been pleased to grant a half-hour's private audience to an insignificant student, who could scarcely be called dry behind the ears, while his excellence himself, and so many

other distinguished persons, had to wait in the outer room.

When the audience was ended, his majesty was graciously pleased to command the bodies of magistrates and burghers to dinner, and quite as graciously to call Representative Larsson to a private audience.

Scarcely had the prefect had five minutes of breathing space, before he summoned Eric Ljung into a side room, and in a tone which did not allow any contradiction, demanded an accurate account of the young man's extraordinary audience.

At this question, Eric Ljung looked extremely simple, thumbed his cap, and reported that his majesty had from paternal favor granted his mother a pension, for which object he should hand in his papers in the afternoon.

"Nothing else?" inquired the severe gentleman, with a keen look.

"Not that I can remember," replied Eric.

"You lie, boy!" said the prefect angrily. "You have been doing the errands of others. His majesty has not needed half an hour to grant so simple a request."

"That is true,—now I remember," rejoined Eric, as he scratched his head behind his ear. "The king was so gracious as to"

"Out with the truth, scoundrel! What was it about?"

"Well, his majesty was so gracious as to give me a box."

"What nonsense is that?"

"Here it is. Your excellence can see for yourself. I do not know, but I think it is—a snuff-box!"

"Out with you,—you arrant knave! Another time, I shall unravel you!" roared the prefect.

CHAPTER XXXV.

CHRONICLE OF THE KING'S-DAY.

REPRESENTATIVE Larsson had a private audience with King Adolf Frederick. The old man seemed to feel that he was for the last time speaking a word of weight in the affairs of his country and his town. From the standpoint of his party, he had rigorously scrutinized the Hats' whole system of government,—had warmly and eloquently advocated the policy of the Caps,—had particularly impressed upon the king the necessity of freeing trade from those chains with which the envy of Stockholm sought to fetter her competitors. He had given vent to his inveterate hatred for all dominion of the nobility—had expressed himself with anger and displeasure over the council's new invasion of the king's authority upon the accession of Adolf Frederick to the throne, and had assured the king of the untitled estates' approval of an extension of royal power, at the expense of the council, though not at that of the estates. And the king had for awhile listened to it with pleasure. Adolf Frederick was a man of heart, and knew how to esteem that candid language, which moreover accorded with his own views, and also this hoary patriarch, who so worthily set forth the treasures of a life's experience before his king.

But unfortunately King Adolf Frederick was not built of that timber which by its firmness lays the foundation of the kingdom's welfare. With all his good will, he quickly wearied of serious subjects, and continually accustomed, in important matters, to depend on the sagacity of his consort, he was undecided, and afraid to form an independent resolution. Old Lars-

son's plans, which involved nothing less than a revolution, with the aid of the untitled estates, against the council and the ruling aristocracy, embarrassed him. He did not exactly know how he ought to treat this subject, who ventured to say to him: "Rule!" and to the most illustrious men of the realm: "Abdicate from the sovereignty!" The feeling of his own inferiority in contrast with that vigorous character nonplussed him, and, in order to get out of that embarrassing position, he seized the subject nearest at hand.

"We thank you for your communication. A king ought to listen to the language of truth, the more so when it is dictated by a tried fidelity; and we shall not neglect, when opportunity occurs, to think upon it. You are a man of integrity, my dear Larsson, and well deserving of your king's favor. We wish to give you some proof of this. You shall be the first merchant to wear the north star."

"I thank your majesty; but I am too old for play-things."

"How? Would a title then suit you better? Well, you shall have an appointment as Councilor of Commerce."

"I thank your majesty, but more highly than all else I value that title your majesty was just now pleased to give me—that of a man of integrity."

"But you must accept some reward," said the king, displeased.

"I shall esteem my small service rewarded many fold, if your majesty thinks best to grant staple freedom to the town of Wasa."

"I regard you as unselfish; but, my dear Larsson, it does not depend on us. We will do what we are able. You know how little that is. Should Providence and popular confidence some day give us opportunity to work for the good of the people, your wish shall be the first that comes into remembrance. But let us say no more about that. Have you a family?"

“Yes, your majesty,—two sons and one daughter living, besides grandchildren.”

“It is our desire to become acquainted with the family of so deserving a man. If it is convenient to you, we will make you a visit this evening at six o'clock.”

“The gracious kindness of your majesty makes me mute with gratitude”

“It will be a pleasure to us to be your guest for a few moments. But I make this condition,” continued the king, in that most cordial tone, which became him so well, and which so often captivated the hearts of his people, “no formalities! Above all—no speeches!”

“We are plain burgher folks,” replied Larsson. “All our humble house is at your majesty’s service, but our loyal respect is not skilled in fine words.”

“Very well, my dear Larsson. Do not allow yourself to be disturbed in your business. *Auf wiedersehen!* You will dine with us, I suppose?”

The representative bowed, and the audience was ended.

Shortly afterward, the king, surrounded by his splendid suite, rode out to review the burgher militia. Who would not then go with him! Everything in Wasa that had feet was in motion, babes not excepted, who were carried by their mothers in their arms. The day was warm, and the burgher soldiers were perspiring piteously, in their new wadmal uniforms, which had cost the tailor so many sleepless nights. Notwithstanding this, the Wasa boys of that time fought bravely for king and country; corpulent and ruddy-faced, they ran forward, and executed their manual exercises in a manner which would perhaps not have awakened great enthusiasm in corporals of the nineteenth century, but which was regarded as masterly in the time of Frederick II. The king was pleased several times to express his great satisfac-

tion,—the troops cheered, and the several thousand spectators who had had time to rest their lungs since yesterday, chimed into the military chorus from the delight of their hearts.

In Wasa, an anecdote of that very remarkable occasion is still related. Lords Bladh and Thölberg (mighty men both of them, and at present of extremely warlike mood, from the honor of representing before “Alexander Magnus,” a military genius of which no one had hitherto thought those peaceful men capable) commanded the troops—Bladh the cavalry, and Thölberg the infantry. Everything passed off excellently until Thölberg, in his zeal, came to place himself with his troops in front of the cavalry, so that these troops were considerably hindered in their motions. Between these two bodies of militia, as we remember, jealousy already existed; so, when the cavalry did not budge from the spot, and when the infantry heard the horses snorting close behind their backs, it was probably nothing but the solemn occasion and the presence of the king that hindered the brave fellows from rapping each other with musket-butts and saber-blades, as is the custom in East Bothnia when friends squabble at an entertainment, though those reciprocal caresses commonly take place with fence-pickets. Bladh, in particular, was not inclined to put up with what he regarded an insult to his troops, and challenged Thölberg to a duel in the pasture at Korsholm. Both, meantime, were summoned to dine with the king. Thölberg, who was a faithful subject, and thought a good dinner better than saber strokes, obeyed the order, but Bladh did not. The challenge became known, Bladh was sent for, and was found at the appointed place of meeting, whither he had gone swearing, and had waited long and patiently for his dilatory antagonist. A reconciliation is said to have taken place afterwards, but meantime the king’s din-

ner, at least in the eyes of Bladh, had made a considerable breach in Thölberg's military reputation.

This would be a good opportunity to describe in a worthy manner that extraordinary dinner, which was without parallel in the history of the East Bothnian kitchen, and very surely far surpassed the plain fare which Charles IX—at that time still "Pretender"—a hundred and fifty-two years before caused to be gotten up for himself at "Mussar Village," on the return trip around the Gulf of Bothnia. Suffice it to relate how Arelus, the master-cook, produced a splendid proof of his unsurpassable talent in preparing fish sauce—how Björk, the kitchen-master, his superior, attributed to himself the honor of the wonderful success with the fatted calf, the very estimable pudding, the really national turkey, and the pastry, erected in Gothic style, and reserved in the bargain the honor of the great pike which had awakened an indescribable admiration. If we add that his majesty was pleased to give a royal order for the preparations—that the suite likewise found traveling very beneficial to the appetite—that the body of burghers reckoned the dishes on their fingers, in order to be able to report them to their wives at home—that the body of magistrates, from sheer humble deference, scarcely ventured to carry their forks to their mouths, and spilled every other spoonful of broth on their napkins, as the gentlemen did not venture to lower their eyes from his majesty to the soup; and that all this took place at open table, before open windows, and in the presence of an innumerable crowd of people outside—we can form an idea of that memorable event. To see the king eat, really eat—begging your pardon, dine—like other mortals, was it not something remarkable! As the people probably could not remember a hundred and fifty years back, many had formed curious ideas about a king and his habits of life. That so sublime a personage should eat anything but raisins, figs, and licorice, or drink any-

thing but church wine, was, to many beholders, incomprehensible ; and that he condescended to order a glass of water, and really drink from it, was still more incomprehensible. They had expected that he would at least have a general feed him, and would be waited on by a councilor of the realm. The king's wide-lapeled, gold-embroidered coat, his magnificent wig with its graceful queue (coat and queue were new-fashioned institutions), the signet-ring on his finger, the inflexible frill, the delicate lace cuffs, his gracious smile, and especially his good appetite, awoke universal wonder. The outdoors democrats of East Bothnia had once more, as upon the arrival of the king, the hearty pleasure of seeing those grand gentlemen very small beside majesty, so that even the prefect shrunk to a dwarf, and Provost Hedman, who had stood so erect in the pulpit, now stood with back bent and spying in vain after an opportunity to finish his speech, which had been so unexpectedly broken off yesterday.

A speech was made there, however, but a very short one, and that was by the prefect, who humbly proposed his majesty's health. Then the cannons boomed from the ramparts, then the cheer from the dining-hall woke a resounding echo among the many spectators outside, and far around the fertile plains of East Bothnia that day went a shout of jubilee that might have aroused from their graves the long-moldering heroes of the Club War.

One house alone in Wasa had no time to send any spectators to the dinner at Korsholm, and that was the house of Representative Larsson. The king was expected there, and there was sweeping and scouring, dusting and festooning, and there the hearts of young and old were in their throats. Both the heads of the family, father and son, had gone to the king's dinner, but not before they had given their people the most minute directions. These were not easy to fulfill. No business of the day must be interrupted, no peasant

sent away without having got his tar-barrels marked and his salt or tobacco-leaves properly stowed. That was the point of ambition—the house of the burgher king was not like the others to creep on its hands and knees in the presence of power. Deferentially, but still bolt upright, it was to open its doors to the sire of the realm. But any one who was witness to the stir within, to the quick steps and busy hands to be seen everywhere, and to that calm, clear way with which Esther Larsson, assisted by her sisters-in-law, tried to bring the hurly-burly into system and order, such an one might suspect that even the proud burgher-house secretly made more ado over the king's visit than the heads of the family were willing to make manifest.

Oh human vanity! In how many costumes are you not clad! Under the gray cowl of the mendicant monk lies hidden the imperiousness of the pope, beneath the humble bow of the court clerk is concealed the gracious condescension of the democrat, within the finance-pondering brow of the austere business man, a furtive glance steals toward the empty ostentation he so deeply despises. There is not a democrat who does not carry inside his jacket the germ of a full-fledged autocrat!

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE MAJESTIES OF THE REALM AND THE BURGHERS.

THE king's impending visit at the house of Representative Larsson it had been impossible to keep secret. The town awoke to new commotion, and crowds of people gathered outside the gate, who, upon attempting to press into the yard, were with difficulty driven back. Envy thrives too well in small towns for

wealthy Larsson not to have many enemies, and these invented wonderful stories. Some claimed that the haughty burgher had bent the knee to the king, and bought a patent of nobility for six barrels of gold. Others related how he alone had obtained the monopoly of exporting grain and importing salt. Others again had heard that Larsson had accepted bribes, it was well understood from whom, and was negotiating about selling the country to the Russians.

The king's suite gave but little attention to this visit, which was nothing unusual. Only Piper, the prefect, had his reasons for suspecting a particular design, and he was not altogether mistaken.

At four minutes past six, his majesty, after having made a tour by carriage through the environs of the town, was pleased to halt at Larsson's gate, and alight amidst the cheering multitude. The representative received his majesty, Larsson junior held the carriage step, and both conducted to their dwelling the high and gracious guest, who was accompanied only by the prefect, the physician, and a couple of his gentlemen of the bedchamber.

The yard was ornamented with birches, and from the gate to the steps the walk was carpeted with fine blue cloth. A few steps away stood a cart loaded with tar-barrels, and farther away another loaded with salt. The store was open, and buying and selling were going on. The steps, the entry, and in fine the whole floor of the large room, were covered with costly Flemish carpets—gifts from the Hollandish business friends of the house. Over the walls of the large room, as well as under its ceiling, fine Hollandish linen was drawn, in the manner which is still in vogue at peasant's weddings in East Bothnia. But all the windows, chairs and tables were uncovered, and farthest up, by the seat of honor, stood, as usual, without any ornament, the worn, old, veined-wood arm-chair of the father of the family. Equally simple and without

ornament were the holiday clothes of the hosts and the family. Everything was calculated to show how splendid they might be if they chose, but that they did not choose to be—in everything.

The first one who met the king in the large room was Esther Larsson, the daughter of the house, who offered his majesty a beaker of welcome, on a chased silver tray, the beaker being also of silver, and of choice workmanship. Adolf Frederick was, as we have already seen, no despiser of a good table, and boasted, like his predecessor, of being an approved wine-connoisseur. From courtesy he tasted of the white wine, under the supposition that it was common French wine, for scarcely any other was known in Finland. But, when he had wet his lips, as he was obliged to do, he seemed surprised, drank again—that time considerably more,—and asked what kind of wine it was.

“Rüdesheimer of 1648,” calmly replied the host.

“How, my dear Larsson? You have wine from the peace of Westphalia? That is more than our royal cellars can boast of.”

“I bought it in Hamburg, after the pillage of Altona, forty years ago,” replied Larsson. “It would be a great honor to me if your majesty would be pleased to allow me to send what I still have left of that kind in my cellar, as a little variety for your majesty’s traveling fare.”

“I thank you,” said the king familiarly, as he once more tasted the precious beverage. “I have not drunk so noble a wine since I set foot on Swedish soil, and am curious to see if the bottles resemble those of the century-old Rhenish, which were preserved in the cellars of my late father.”

“Eric!” said Larsson to the student, who was standing bolt upright in the door, “run down into cellar number three, to the furthest end on the right-hand

side, fourth shelf from the bottom, and bring a couple of bottles."

Eric bounded off.

And now the king's eyes were for the first time fastened on the tall, stately woman who had reached him the beaker,—and although malice itself could not upbraid the domestic Adolf Frederick with possessing the gallant disposition by which his predecessors had gained so doubtful a notoriety, he was far from indifferent to feminine charms.

"My daughter," said Larsson, presenting her.

"Ah!" said the king, who rarely left any of his little witticisms unused. "So this is our cousin, the Princess of Wasa? I am charmed to make her acquaintance."

"My daughter is too humble to be worthy the honor your majesty is pleased to bestow on her," replied the father, who did not like this jest, even from a king.

But the king was in a good humor to-day. He continued to address Esther in the same graciously jesting tone, and seemed to be entertained by embarrassing that ignorant, plainly-clad burgher girl. But in this he deceived himself. Esther replied so skillfully, so sensibly, so humbly, and yet so decidedly, that the king, scarcely less surprised than when he tested the wine, changed his manner, and was pleased to make himself informed as to her education and earlier life.

The good king, Adolf Frederick, grew more and more gracious and interested. It seemed to him that this "cabbage-worm," as he had once been pleased to express himself, might contain the materials for a butterfly of pretty high rank. He resolved to go straight at the matter.

"My dear Larsson," said he, as those present received a signal to withdraw, "answer me plainly: why

do you not give your daughter to Count Bertelsköld, who requests her hand?"

For a moment, the old burgher was silent. He suspected that the king had been instigated to ask that question.

"Fire and water," he replied, "cannot be united without peril to one or both."

"Let them hiss," rejoined the king, with a smile; "it may calm them both. You know, my dear Larsson, I have seen matches where the parties were less suitable for each other. Our cousin, your daughter, speaks excellent German. I am convinced that her other qualities render her worthy of a higher place in society; and as Count Bertelsköld is an honorable person, whom I esteem, I cannot comprehend what you have against it."

"Nothing less than everything, your majesty. To unite two classes of society, which the traditions of the centuries have made eternal antagonists to each other, would be just as foolish as to wish to found the fortune of a child on the gain of an empty name."

"Quite the contrary, it ought to be a good deed, to conquer prejudices. I take the responsibility of your daughter's happiness, and ask her hand for my adjutant, Colonel Count Bertelsköld."

"Pardon, your majesty,—it is impossible."

"How, my dear Larsson? Is your king your guest, and you give so little regard to his wishes?"

"Everything that I possess, and that is in my power, is at your service, your majesty; do as you like with the little remnant of life which yet may be granted me, but deign to leave to me my paternal rights. I have sworn a solemn oath never to permit that connection, so long as I live; I have taken Heaven to witness upon it, and only a miracle would be able to change my resolve."

"We had expected more reason from an old man, and more consideration for our gracious good intent,"

said the king angrily. "We will not take up your precious time any longer, and we wish you a good evening," and with a very ungracious nod, his majesty took a few steps toward the outer door. But there stood Eric Ljung, blazing red, with a bottle of the old Rüdeshheimer in each hand.

"We shall order our steward to pay for the wine," said the king, half irritated and half pacified by the rare present, as with the air of a connoisseur he looked at the bottles. Just then he observed that Eric's right hand was bleeding profusely, through a handkerchief wrapped around it.

"What is that?" he asked.

"I have cut me on a piece of glass," replied Eric.

But Adolf Frederick was too kind-hearted, and thought that the hand bled too profusely, to leave the wound uninvestigated, the more so as it had been caused in a commission for his sake. In a moment he had forgotten his anger, beckoned Eric to the window, and was pleased to order his *valet* to unwrap the handkerchief.

"That was not cut with glass, that is the bite of a dog," said the *valet*, as he showed old Larsson the boy's hand, which was bleeding from a deep bite between the thumb and forefinger.

"It is possible there was a dog in the darkness," replied Eric, with embarrassment.

"I will send my body-physician hither," said the king, troubled. "The dog-days are at hand, and no one knows but that the dog may have been mad."

Old Larsson, however, had scarcely cast a glance at Eric's hand before he began to tremble violently, and became ashen gray in the face. "Be calm," said the king, who took this for fright; "Petersen knows the art of curing hydrophobia, and he will be here in a few minutes."

And with a look much more gracious than that which he had lately worn, the good king Adolf Freder-

ick, who liked to give a comforting word to every trouble which he could not alleviate, withdrew. But why did the multitude now cheer far more than before? Why were now twice as many hats and caps swung in air? Not for the king alone—not for the sympathy he had shown a poor boy—but the cheer went up because the old burgher king, as rumor with great haste proclaimed, had fallen into disgrace—because he had thus put himself to vain trouble—because he was not to be a nobleman—because he was not to have the sole right of export for grain, and of import for salt—because he was not going to sell the country to the Russians. And yet that old burgher had not made use of his great influence for anything but the weal of the town of Wasa and of the Finnish trade. But this the mass of people did not understand, that mass which is everywhere like itself.

Scarcely had the king departed, before Larsson, with tottering limbs, motioned Eric to follow him into another room, and asked whence he had obtained that little copper ring which he wore on his forefinger.

Eric related what the reader already knows. He had put the ring on his finger merely for amusement.

“The hand of God! The hand of God is upon me!” groaned the old burgher king, as he sank down on his bed in a swoon.

No one but Esther understood those words. Pale and terrified, she hid them in her heart, while she sought to recall her father to life.

But as soon as tranquillity had been somewhat restored, after this unexpected scene, Eric asked to speak a few words with Larsson junior. “I neither cut me with glass nor was bitten by a dog,” said he, “but by a thief.” He then described how in the darkness he had walked forward in the inmost cellar, when he had there ran against a fellow who was striking fire with flint. In the belief that it was a thief, Eric had held him fast, and after a violent struggle, during which he

had been bitten in the hand, he had finally succeeded in shutting him into one of the side cellars. He must be there still.

Following the directions of Eric, the cellar door was opened and a dead man found hanging to a hook in the wall. They took him to the light. It was Captain Neptunus Gast.

“And can it be that he was trying to steal?” asked Eric in amazement.

Larsson the younger shook his head and whispered: “Thank the eternal fortune of yourself and us all, boy, that you arrived just in time, but if you value your life keep still about it. In that cellar there were four barrels of powder which came yesterday, and ought to have been taken to the magazine to-day, but in the bustle about the king they were forgotten. Captain Gast must have known it, and as he at last bore us all a mortal hatred, he stole into the cellar during the confusion to . . . it is horrible to think!”

“When the king was here?”

“Yes, he wanted to blow up the house; and had it not been for you, or rather God’s hand through you, the realm of Sweden would now have been a widow. But you see *the other* took his own!”

CHAPTER XXXVII.

TWO LETTERS.

THERE was one person in Larsson’s house who had no suspicion of the excitement about the king, and that was Penna. That good fellow, as we remember, had taken a drop too much in his grief, and had been quartered in the night-room. It might have

been midnight when he at last awoke and found Eric Ljung sleeping by his side.

Penna's head was very much confused, and might be likened to a shallow sea in a fog, where here and there a stone protrudes, but the thoughts vainly labor to row to the shore. He had a vague idea that he had in some way behaved stupidly; but how, it was impossible for him to make out.

He shook Eric. Eric was not one of those who are awakened by a sneeze, but after a quarter of an hour's manipulation he got his eyes half open.

"What did I do yesterday?" said Penna.

"Slept," replied Eric.

"What more?"

"Let me alone!"

But Penna must needs have a clear idea of what he had done, and in order to get rid of him, Eric was at last obliged to enumerate his exploits, beginning with the assault on Count Bertelsköld, and ending with his unruly drunken fit, when he swung the ax at the representative.

Penna meditated awhile, and then took Eric by the shoulders, placed him upright on the floor, took him to the table, pressed him down on a chair, and said: "Write!"

"What shall I write?" said Eric, laughing in his vexation, for that was the first time he had heard Penna—who, in spite of his name, could scarcely make his mark—call for help in writing.

"Write as I say," said Penna, with emphasis. And Eric, with his bandaged hand, wrote as follows:

"Because I am a dunce and have pushed my master. I have been at the alehouse. I have got drunk. And because they have gone off with my bride. But it is all the same to me. For I pushed my master. Gast is to blame for it. I have been a fool. His royal majesty will say to the sergeant-major"

"Is the letter to the king?"

“Whom else would it be to? Write on: Sergeant-major, see that this fellow has fifty lashes in the presence of the troops. For he pushed his master . . . ”

“That is the third time now about the master.”

“Write once more, pushed his master. But since I have been a hussar. Royal majesty will let me be a hussar again. Royal majesty can give me dog’s fare. Have you put it down dog’s fare?”

“Have you put it down dog’s fare?” wrote Eric.

“And a whipping once a day. Because I have not been fit for a peasant. Because I have had more horses than cows. Royal majesty ought to see my chestnut. And his name is Bogge. He has white fore-feet. I forge the horse-shoes myself. The crab-salters in Storkyro cannot forge horse-shoes. And what kind of horse-shoe nails have they? And they are not fit for swine. For they ruin the hoofs. And then they have a farrier in Gumsila. He would do very well to clip”

“Perhaps it would be best to come to the principal subject.”

“Immediately,” said Penna. “Write in it: I have been a fool. I have pushed my master ”

“Now that is the fourth time.”

“Write in it only: I want Bertelsköld to have my bride. Since she wants to have him. He is fit for her. And he shall have Bertila farm. That is fit for him. There is stable-room for sixteen horses. Because I want to be a hussar. My uncle shall not have a chance to snuff on the farm. For he is a skinflint. But what my uncle is does not concern royal majesty. Period. Eric wrote this for me. God save your majesty. I am till pale death,

ISTVAN,

Whom they call Benjamin Bertila, trained hussar.”

“And what do you intend to do with this letter?” inquired Eric, as he folded it and wrote the superscription to the king.

“You can bow better than I, so you shall take it to the king this minute,” said Penna.

“In the middle of the night! He is asleep.”

“Then wake him up. It is broad daylight.”

With difficulty Eric succeeded in convincing the author of that remarkable letter that kings could not, so easily as students, be wakened out of their sweetest sleep, and persuaded him for a few hours yet to be quiet. But scarcely had the clock struck five in the morning before Eric was standing at the gates of Kors-holm, with the letter in his pocket. He was willing to hazard something for the cause he had espoused, and was sensible enough to expect more from a crazy letter than from a petition drawn according to the rules of all official forms and proprieties.

At seven o'clock that morning the king was to continue his journey northward, and everything at Korskholm was already in motion. The carriages were drawn out, the royal kitchen and the baggage loaded in, and lackeys, coachmen and *valets* were flitting hither and thither in the yard. How was Eric in this hurly-burly to succeed in getting his letter into the king's own hand?

He plucked up courage and turned to kitchen-master Björck. That mighty man remembered the pike, measured him with a contemptuous glance, and turned his back to him with the words, “Go to the master-cook and ask if there is any fish here to clean to-day!”

This was the situation of our friend when at that moment he saw the master-cook Arelius standing by a baggage wagon, with his hands full. “Can I help?” said Eric.

The master-cook also remembered the pike, and his countenance brightened. “Wait till I look after those lazy rascals,” said he.

Eric made known his errand, and did not neglect to relate the insulting words of the kitchen-master.

“Did he say that?” exclaimed the master-cook.

“Well, then I will show him that within half an hour the letter will be in the king’s own hand. As though the kitchen-master was the only one who had anything to say at court!”

An hour passed, and everything was in order for the departure. His majesty then was once more pleased to honor the broken-boned count with a gracious visit, in order to inform himself of his condition. It had become worse, and was critical. Body-physician Petersen drew his learned forehead into wrinkles, and muttered something about gangrene, which would soon appear. The good Adolf Frederick was touched and troubled.

“Is there no human art that can save him?” he asked.

“No,” said the body-physician, laconically.

“Yes,” said a voice in a corner of the room, and Esther Larsson stepped forth from behind a screen.

“Ah!” said the king in surprise. “My beautiful cousin, the Princess of Wasa! You believe then, my friend, in the power of love? I hope you are right.”

The body-physician, with learned disdain, turned away; but Esther said with confidence: “Your majesty may perhaps know of the common saying, that here in East Bothnia we understand witchcraft. Count Bertelsköld is going to regain his health—not by the aid of the powers of darkness, but of the powers of light.”

“If my beautiful cousin can keep her promise, I will gladly give her the patient himself for doctor’s fee,” merrily replied the king. “But unfortunately this is something which does not depend on me. By the way, can my cousin tell me what this letter may signify? The writer really has a claim on our royal favor, for he has given us much amusement, and an excellent appetite this morning.”

“The letter is from an honest, ignorant man, to whom my father had promised my hand,” said Esther, blushing.

“I understand. So from that direction there is nothing to fear. But your father, my charming cousin, your father is of iron. He cannot be bent even by the intercession of his king.”

“No, your majesty, he cannot be bent, he can only break. Deign to cast a glance at these lines, which he charged me to deliver into your majesty’s hand.”

The king read as follows:

“Crushed by the doom of Heaven, I beg my master and king most graciously to pardon, that I, who have been willing to sacrifice everything for king and country, yesterday refused his gracious wish, when he was pleased to honor my humble house with his sublime presence. Immediately afterward I felt the hand of the King of Kings upon me, and understand at last that not I, not a weak mortal, whose firm resolve is only impotence, but the Judge of hearts and wills alone is the one who decrees the destinies of men. If my king still perseveres in the gracious wish he uttered yesterday, I shall esteem myself happy to give my paternal consent and blessing thereto, and humbly beg until the fast approaching end of my life, to be the recipient of your majesty’s exalted favor and grace. I remain, etc.,

“LARS LARSSON,

“Ex-Representative.”

“God bless that heart of stone, which has for once softened!” said the king, with emotion. “Remember me to your father, my friend, and say that we remain his affectionately, with all royal favor, and by no means intend to leave his consent unused. Here, Count Bertelsköld, I restore you more than you have lost in your visit to Wasa. My cousin—I suppose you will still allow me to use that familiar word—I entreat you to win your future consort back to health, to his country and to his king, who in him appreciates a true nobleman and a faithful assistant. Farewell! It will be a sincere pleasure to me some time to see Count and Count-

ess Bertelsköld in our royal metropolis. I am now going to say farewell to my faithful Wasa ! ”

In these words there were now, as often, so much simple dignity, so much true royalty, that even those who did not cherish any high opinion of Adolf Frederick's qualities as ruler, could not deny him their most cordial esteem as a man. A few minutes later, the king was sitting in his carriage, surrounded by his suite and the cheering multitude. Among those who threw their caps in air longest and with most ardor was the student, Eric Ljung. Was it imagination, or did he really see the king honor him separately with a gracious nod? Eric was convinced that he did, and as long as the dust still rose above the carriages, from the road up toward Ny Carleby, Eric was heard shouting, “Long live the king! Hurra!” until his voice at last resembled that of a hoarse cockerel, which by incessant crowing vainly tries to cultivate a masculine reputation.

But the “sun of the North” continued his journey through East Bothnia, as a previously cited court poet describes in the following eloquent manner :

Then on to Ny Carleby soon the king went,
 Where everyone longed to behold him;
 And never a tongue by his praises was spent,
 Nor an arm but that longed to enfold him.
 Old Jacobstad reaches a century sere,
 As out from her gates he is wending,
 While burghers that view him delighted appear,
 And praise to our king is ascending.

To Carleby Gamla, the parish and town,
 He next as a guest is invited,
 Where the peasant with grain-ears adorns the hat-crown,
 To tell his fine harvests delighted.
 Where'er the king comes with his sunshine and peace
 Nor garden nor grainfield can wither :
 Oh, ne'er may the care of the kind Heaven cease,
 That brings our beloved hero hither !

In Brahestad, Metala village, appears
 Our king, while the glad thousands gather,
 And joyous the heavens re-echo the cheers
 That wake for the country's dear father.
 Bergen replies, and together rejoice
 All men where our Adolf may meet them ;
 'Tis a hundred and fifty long years since the voice
 Of any loved monarch did greet them.

Her proud arch of triumph fair Uleå rears;
 Too short is the time to complete it,
 Ere he, like old Athon,* in brightness appears,
 Most meet and most worthy to greet it.
 Happy beholds he a people whose love
 Aloft on their shoulders would raise him,
 Would he but let them, their fondness to prove,
 The while their glad voices do praise him.

And now upon Torneå beams of his grace
 Descend with the blessing they carry ;
 Of all both wide hemispheres this is the place
 Where the sun is wont longest to tarry.
 Shalt thou then vanish so quickly away,
 Thy cheer from our chill region taking ?
 Shall our long night be unbroken by day,
 Because of thy glory's forsaking !

Then touched is the king, for the journey begun
 Is slackened awhile by this grieving,
 And seemingly he whom they sing as their sun
 The sun of its light is bereaving.
 Splendid but perilous, too, are its rays,
 Pain pierces the eyes while we view it,
 But *this* sun a healing sends forth while we gaze,
 And strength and keen vision come through it.

* Athon was one of the horses of the sun.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE PRINCESS OF WASA.

THE magic power of which Esther Larsson had with such confidence spoken to the king, was not the power of love alone—it had also a more prosaic, or, if you like, a more real form. In East Bothnia, as more or less everywhere in Finland, an art of healing had grown up among the people out of the old root of superstition. The oldest remedies were conjurations, steam-baths, rubbings, and in later times liquor. In the hands of a few initiated, a surgery was gradually developed, which the learned doctors would do well not utterly to despise, for there might be some things for them to learn from it.

One of the initiated in that art was at this time Brita Smeds, or “Smeds Brita,” from New Carleby parish, known of old in the Larsson house in Wasa, whither she had more than once been summoned, and always with success. Like the most of her calling, she had begun by experimenting a number of people into eternity, but ended with giving the greater number a passport to life and health, whom the learned profession had already ticketed to eternity.

This capable old woman had now been sent for, but no one ventured to present her so long as the body physician remained. By the time she arrived, Count Bertelsköld’s condition had become so much worse by the treatment of body-physician Petersen, that the sick man, with all certainty, expected to die according to the rules of the art. Esther alone had kept up courage and hope, and when she at last stepped forward to his

bed with Smeds Brita by her side, she exclaimed, "Here I bring health and life with me!"

Bertelsköld cast a despairing look at the brawny, ill-favored, pock-pitted old woman, and sadly whispered:

"No human power can save me now."

"And who tells you my hope rests on human power?" said Esther, with fervor. "I bring with me here the power of God in the humble."

Pock-pitted as Smeds Brita was, she was no disagreeable individual, and when she rolled up the sleeves of her gray jacket, it was seen that she was broad shouldered as a man, and had muscles like sole-leather. Neither was she wont to observe ceremony with people. Cottager or prefect was to her a mass of sinews and bones which were to be put in order, and so, when her hard hands examined the fractures, the patient uttered a cry of pain.

"It is not worth while to cry," said Smeds Brita, comforting him in her fashion. "If you want to get on your feet again, you must suffer a little."

"How is that?" whispered Esther, trembling against her will.

"Nothing much," said the old woman. "The right arm is not broken, but only out of joint. Such a bit of a hurt will be well in six days. The leg is broken in two places; but what should that signify to a doctor, more than one fracture? It is badly splinted, and must be broken again. Besides that, there is a loose sliver of bone, which causes all the pain. It was well that I came. To-morrow it would have been all over with that gentleman."

Without any further waste of words, Brita took the injured leg, laid it very calmly across a chair, and once more broke it. This time, the count ground his teeth, and uttered not a sound.

"What are you doing!" exclaimed Esther in terror.

“Nothing much,” said Smeds Brita again. “It is only a little cartilage that had grown together in the wrong place. Why, in that way the man would have been as lame as a bow-shot crane—in case he chanced to live.”

“You put yourself to needless trouble,” groaned Bertelsköld. “I am not a horse, my good woman ; I cannot endure it.”

“Nonsense !” muttered the old woman. “But I tell you that you are going to get on your feet again, if you will only hold your mouth, and do as I tell you. Do you think this is *essentia dulcis* ?”

After the swelling had been reduced by cold applications, the old woman, with great care, set the broken bone, and put on a new bandage, so simply and naturally that a surgeon would have called it a plaything. But the result showed that Smeds Brita understood her business. The severe pains were almost instantly relieved, and after a few days, when the piece of bone was gotten out, the patient was out of danger. The ward of love, never wearying either night or day, made the sick man well. The bone was healed in a very short time, and if the arm gave more trouble, it was only because it had to be “rubbed,” morning and evening, in a way that made the delicate titled flesh ache.

“Did I not say so ?” exclaimed Esther, with beaming eyes, one day in the beginning of August, when the last bandage was taken off, and the summer air, through the open window, played refreshingly around the cheeks of the count, who was beginning to regain color. “Did I not say God’s power is great in the humble !”

“And in the weak !” said Bertelsköld with a smile. “It is not quite as it ought to be here : the man is weak and the woman strong !”

“You are to grow strong also, to carry a humble

plebeian wife in your arms through the world," smilingly replied Esther.

At the feast of St. Lawrence, on the tenth of August, the bans of marriage were for the first time proclaimed in the Wasa church, for the king's adjutant colonel, and lord of the chamber, the Right Honorable Charles Victor Bertelsköld, and the virtuous and honorable Miss Esther Larsson, "with the Christian wish of God's grace and blessing on this their lawful purpose." Although it is known of old that no betrothal can be kept secret two weeks in Wasa, and consequently this had long been the common topic of conversation, the curiosity and surprise were none the less. The king's jest became known, and "The Princess of Wasa" was upon the lips of all. Of course explanations of this so extremely singular event were not wanting. As few or none knew the former youthful love of the betrothed, the greater number took it for granted that Smeds Brita, who understood witchcraft (for what old woman, and especially what quack doctress in East Bothnia does not?) had given the aristocratic bridegroom a love-potion, while he lay sick and injured at Korsholm. For doing this, she had been well paid by the proud burgher king and his equally haughty daughter, who to this late hour had remained unmarried very likely because no one less than a count was good enough for her. And more than one had said so before. What kind of a match was Penna for one who could speak German, and perhaps Spanish! And then too it was known how the gentlemen in the king's retinue lived by the sweat and toil of the people. The count had, of course, lived in revel and riot, like all the others, and it was plain that when he could not tell the sun from the moon, he tumbled down from the ramparts of Korsholm, and broke his leg. That is the way grand gentlemen perform, and now it is the crown that is going to pay Smeds Brita. As to her, it was a pity

that witches were no longer burned,—in old times many a one had been obliged to singe their flesh for less crimes than hers !

Thus was circulated the gossip in the good town, and not least by those whom Smeds Brita had mended, both as to arms and legs, or by those who had had their best living by the extensive trade of the Larsson house. But untroubled about all that, the daughter of the burgher king, the Princess of Wasa, sat at the loom every minute when she could be spared by father and lover, and with her own hand worked at her wedding outfit. It was a pardonable ambition that she should at least not come empty-handed into that noble house, and, as she had plenty of time to think about it, everything which belonged to that outfit was richer and more complete than in most of the houses of a much higher class in society.

In the middle of the month, the count began to walk out, and Louisa-day, the twenty-fifth of August, the queen's names-day, the Princess of Wasa became his bride. On that day, everything was garlanded and elegantly arranged in the Larsson house. All the costly carpets, all the silver tankards and expensive trays were produced, to the admiration and envy of the many guests ; only the worn old arm-chair of veined wood stood, in its old-time way, in front of the bridal canopy. The bride herself was dressed in the heaviest white silk, such as now-a-days is not woven, or obtained for any price. Above the myrtle wreath, in her luxuriant hair, she wore a bridal gift which had just been sent by the king himself, and that was a large pin of gold, fixed to a small but flashing coronet of diamonds. Never had Esther Larsson been so beautiful, but also never so humble in her inmost heart. Reading her deep, serious, tender looks, it was seen that, to-day, she felt herself to be less than the least ; and that she who was so stately, and the recipient of such honors from all, would rather have sunk on her

knees, and said to her God : "Thou knowest, O my Lord and my God, that I have not sought this honor. According to Thy will I hold it as a charge, and before Omnipotence, which alone is worthy of praise and glory, I lay down these crowns of myrtle and diamonds. O Lord ! look in mercy upon Thy poor handmaid, and be Thou henceforth her guide in this strange pathway."

The bridegroom himself, in his fine uniform, was equally serious, and still pale from his recent sickness. He could not as yet fully support his weight on his newly healed leg, and so there was no real dance at the wedding. Only in the bowers in the yard, the young folks, led on by Eric Ljung, had an opportunity in the evening to amuse themselves with merry dancing games, like "Simon wants to go courting," and "The swain walks into the dance," and several others which have now gone out of use.

The bride was led forth and given to the groom by her eldest brother Lars. Pastor Bertel, the younger brother, performed the ceremony. It was a solemn wedding, with three or four psalms, which were sung by all present, and the nearest relatives among the young people held the red canopy of silk. The newly-wedded pair then went to the old father, who sat in his arm-chair, and, kneeling before him, received his blessing.

The old burgher king had not been able—or rather had not wished—to lead his daughter to the bridal seat. His tenacious strength was broken by inner struggles more than by his last sickness. Esther had been right : he could break, but not be bent. But a little while before how contemptuously had he spoken of the king's ring ! And how safe had he believed himself to be when he buried that thing of evil magic in Brandö Sound ! But no mortal can altogether free himself from the weaknesses of his time, and in that day superstition still had vigorous life in Finland.

Only from the surface its most repulsive scum was a little removed. Witches were no longer burnt, but witchcraft was believed in. The king's ring still retained its full power, and even that supremely strong soul was under its influence. Its singular recovery the day after Larsson had regarded it as eternally buried, had crushed with a single blow all the self-confidence of that obstinate old man, and, as he himself said, placed him under the judgment of God. He would not admit to himself how great a part his superstition had in this,—he would not bend under his own weakness, and that was why he saw in the ring a condemnation from God. And under the weight of that higher power which had mocked his wisdom, he sunk to the ground. From that day Larsson no longer regarded himself as the master of his own will. When he gave away his daughter it seemed to him as if he was obeying the stern command of the eternal powers. He himself was, and remained in his heart, the same inflexible leader of the East Bothnian democracy, and consequently the same enemy to the nobility and aristocracy, that he had always been.

But the very fact that he looked upon himself as a choiceless instrument for the decree of the higher powers, gave to the once proud burgher king an air of solemnity and strangeness. It was so unusual to see that austere man submissive. When the tall but now bowed old man, with snow-white hair, and serious, furrowed brow, laid his withered hands on the heads of the newly-married pair, a thrill of devotion ran through the whole assembly. They knew what this meant. Never had the burgher king seemed more worthy of his royal name than at the moment when for the first time he seemed to be unfaithful to it. In that moment he broke with the tradition of his whole life; but it was like when a king by the will of Providence falls at the head of his people.

For while he blessed the newly-wedded pair, and

adorned the plebeian name of his daughter with the coronet of a countess, his meaning was understood when he said, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will to men!"

With that he broke the wand over that long strife, which for centuries had sundered nobles and commoners in Finland, and the spirit of peace was beginning to preach reconciliation between those severed classes of society. True it is, indeed, that the same conflict continued for a long time yet, but it was the swelling of the sea after the storm. The first morning watch of the freer spirit of the eighteenth century had broken the point of the opposing columns.

Countess Bertelsköld could not be prevailed upon to leave her old father, and as the count needed a rest of some time in order to regain his health perfectly, it was decided that the newly-wedded pair should for the present remain in Wasa. The old burgher king, however, did not long lay claim to his daughter's tender care. One day in the early part of September—it was Queen's day, the 7th—he fell asleep, without even his daughter, who was at the head of his bed, having observed it, and from his long, toilsome, and unquiet life, was at rest. His last words were recollections from the great famine in his youth. "Sweep the storehouse," he whispered, "the people are hungry; a barrel of gold for a barrel of rye!"

As usual, the merits of the busy man were acknowledged after his death. The great cry about his parsimony, his grain-extortions, and similar matters, hushed by degrees, and the intelligent began to understand that a merchant's gain, when it is properly acquired and wisely employed, is also the gain of the whole community. Neither did Provost Hedman neglect to make use of this occasion at last to let the good

people of Wasa have the pleasure of his long speech, which was so shamefully broken off at the arrival of the king. And as a skilled speaker is never at a loss as to expedients for dishing up scraps of old supplies, the provost knew how to arrange his words so dexterously that the patient audience for two hours believed themselves listening to a funeral sermon over Larsson, while the real subject was the journey of "The Sun" through East Bothnia, and the special reverence, fidelity and zeal of the clergy toward "Phœbus."

In business as in everything else, Count Bertelsköld was a nobleman. He made no bargains therefore as to his wife's portion, and calumny, which now left the dead in peace, turned instead toward the sons Larsson. It was claimed—with what reason we know not—that the brothers, and especially Lars, on the ground of the father's will, knew how to profit by the count's liberality, and measured out the sister's share in the rich inheritance quite sparingly. Certain it is that the inventory was hastily made, that the numerous family were put off with a few small gifts, and that the Countess Bertelsköld, though she did indeed take with her from her father's house a valuable outfit of silver, linen, wearing apparel and household goods, did not receive over four thousand dollars in ready money. "The Hope," the special ship of the house, which had made a trip to England since we last heard it spoken off, was now equipped—so it was stated—for the sole purpose of carrying the count and countess with their outfit across to Stockholm. It was probable, however, that the voyage was also to be profitable to the owners.

After Smeds Brita had been richly rewarded, Count and Countess Bertelsköld, in the latter part of September, left Wasa, and after a stormy voyage of two weeks arrived at Stockholm, where for the present we can leave them, with the glad certainty that they were happy in their love and in their mutual esteem and confidence.

Eric Ljung had by that time been in Åbo a month already, had entered the university with honor, and had, moreover, been agreeably surprised with a royal stipend of fifty plåts a year, which was sufficient for his books, and sometimes to spice with small beer and country cheese the bread-sack and the butter-firkin which his mother, our old acquaintance, the brisk and affectionate Marie Pehrson—formerly Marie Larsson—had sent from Lojtax to her darling in Åbo. He had also had a friendly letter from his noble patron, Doctor Linnæus, who gave him good advice about his studies, and promised next summer to send him money for a botanical tour in Satakunda and Tavastland. In the letter were also enclosed a few very welcome lines from Erica Lindelia, which related that during the summer she had not only examined six new kinds of mushrooms, and put fourteen snakes into spirits, but had also learned to boil eggs. She moreover mentioned in passing that she had an aunt in Tavastland whom she had obtained leave to visit next summer, when it might perhaps be convenient for Eric to botanize in that vicinity. It would certainly be pleasant to meet, she opined, but Eric was by no means to put himself to any trouble for her sake. And this the little Erica repeated so many times in the letter that Eric almost began to suspect that it was she and no one else who had gotten up the new plan for his botanical tour, although it was so cunningly made to appear that his uncle the archiater alone had hit upon it.

One person still remains concerning whose further fate we must not be left in ignorance, and that is Penna. That good man had now had time to shake off sleep, since that tipsy night when he wrote to the king, and gave at once bride and farm to his master whom he had “pushed.” The first gift had been thankfully accepted, but the second no one had heeded, and upon more careful reflection, Penna decided to be

a wealthy peasant rather than a poor hussar, who in the bargain was—according to his own rash demand—to have dog's fare, and get a drubbing once a day. The count's recovery made the honest soul so sincerely happy, that he not only with great tranquillity attended the wedding of his former betrothed, but also gave the bridegroom his famous Bogge, with the white forefeet. But Penna had had enough of matrimonial troubles, and adopting as son and heir one of Eric Ljung's younger brothers, the little Pehrsons from Munsala, he remained a steady old bachelor all his days.

Thus in course of time a new race budded in Bertila farm, a new race on the plains and downs of Finland; and maybe we shall some time see those buds burst into blossom. One period spreads its branches far into the next. Beside the withered century-old pine, fallen before the storm, shoots the light-green twig out of its new root, and the strong trunk in its prime. Why should we not, beside a completed life like the burgher king's, and a blooming summer like Esther Larsson's, tarry also one happy moment at the butterfly hunt of Gustavus III, at the promise of the future for the student, and at Erica Lindelia's green heart-leaves? High above them, behind them, before them, lies the horizon of a splendid time, which casts in the reflex of its hue upon them all. Day has dawned the wilderness; the time of liberty in Sweden and Finland is at its meridian. When and what shall the horizon of the evening be? When and how shall the new morning dawn? Long ago were questions answered, which no one could answer then—what are ye but humanity's same, eternally renewed questions of life? Fall, thou withered leaf; and germinate in thy concealment, thou tender seed; only fall thou nobly, and germinate for greatness! Whether you foretell evening or morning, it is all the day of the Almighty, whose harvests blossom for eternity.

PART II.—THE FREETHINKER.

INTERLUDE.

ONCE more we pray the kind reader to tarry an evening in the well-known attic, where all is as of old, except that the walls and windows have become somewhat dilapidated, so that the chill November storm whistles unduly in through the cracks, and sometimes makes the Surgeon's rusty rifle thump against the wall, or his stuffed birds flap their wings. Around the fire in the large open fire-place, once more sit the old friends, unchanged, indestructible, inaccessible it seems to all-ravaging time. Looking at them more carefully, it will perhaps be discovered that the Surgeon's gray hair has begun to whiten, that old grandmother's soft hands have grown more wrinkled than before, that the learned schoolmaster's dark figure more and more suggests a dried-up switch, and that the martial postmaster, with his red mustache and his hundred vexations of the devil in his stiff leg, has more and more assumed the appearance of a Jönköping's wood-cut representing Don Miguel of Portugal on his entry into Lisbon. But though the Surgeon thus cannot be suspected of having preserved in his old medicine-chest a bottle of that precious elixir of life which confers an eternal youth, we find instead some other of those ingredients which it is claimed lengthen life, namely, good conscience, a listening-ear, a sympathizing heart, contentment with his lot, a jovial jest when occasion presents, or a vexation such as refreshes the vital spirits, but still more those straightforward old habits, or that lack of habits, which, like the hand on the clock, goes unswervingly its way, with the sun or against it.

Beside them sits our friend Annie Sophie, just as young and glad, just as decided in her sympathies and antipathies as before, and just as industriously occupied in the dear work of sewing on her wedding outfit. Behind her is seen a new-comer in the company, Abiel Halm, lately become student, and in that character appointed as under-teacher with Magister Svenonius, whose arm has at last wearied of the many floggings, and who has therefore allowed himself to be prevailed on, in that important part of school matters, to ask for the aid of a younger assistant. If we add that Abiel Halm, for whom the time had not yet arrived for him to call himself Olkinen,* is a broad-shouldered, light-haired world-subduer of eighteen years, whose proud consciousness of his own importance not infrequently comes in conflict with his dutiful respect for the higher learning in the schoolmaster's person, and that he now and then casts charmed but unanswered glances at Anne Sophie, I have said about all that the reader needs for the present to know concerning that hopeful youth. On footstools behind him whisper the swarm of four or five younger citizens of the world, whom the reader knows of old, and among whom Jonathan, the admirer of Charles XII, and a little bright-eyed wide-awake girl by the name of Elizabeth Gret, had grown an inch nearer the ceiling since we last heard them racketing in the attic.

The Surgeon had just thrown the first meshes of a new net around the worn netting-rod, and asked, with his usual half-satiric, half good-natured smile, what his audience thought of King Adolf Frederick.

"Hem," answered the schoolmaster, taking a pinch of snuff. "I recollect that his majesty, Adolf Frederick, most illustrious of memory, was a well read man, and that is becoming to a king. He also was careful to educate his children."

"The devil! That was a coward of a king!" burst

* The Finnish for that name.

out the postmaster, who during the former story had with difficulty been able to restrain the expression of his deep disdain. "The late King Frederick had a grain of backbone in him yet, and could shoot the ears off from a hare on full bound; but his successor would have answered to sit at the spinning-wheel, with a nightcap over his ears. Why, he was under petticoat government! Why the devil did he allow himself to be controlled by his old woman?"

"That has happened to many greater warriors than he," responded Svenonius, with a furtive glance at his friend, who with good reason was suspected of standing in awe of his housekeeper's slipper; "and besides it was the parties, you see brother"

"Well, why did he allow himself to be bossed by the parties? He ought to have driven the scoundrels out doors, and said 'For shame, you rascals! It is I who am king!'"

"But how then would it have gone with liberty?" interposed Anne Sophie, whose enthusiasm was divided between Charles XII and liberty.

"And how then would have fared the consciousness of the period?" Abiel Halm ventured to add, with the little scent of Hegel he had by this time gained from the covers.

"Liberty!" disdainfully resumed the postmaster, "if I had been Adolf Frederick, I would have beaten the liberty out of them till the dust flew."

"Oh, well, cousin, there should be moderation in all things!" responded old grandmother. "I must say that I agree with cousin in this, that what is to be will be, whether a person is king or boot-black. The government is to be respected, and any one who does not obey may get his just punishment. But you see, cousin, it must be law and not the club that governs a kingdom, and it is said that in King Adolf Frederick's time, the Hats, or Helmets, whatever they were called, had law on their side. As far as I can comprehend,

the late king was a thoroughly good man, who wished the whole world well, if he could only escape the many speeches. There was a horrible amount of verse written at that time! I wonder what they had to offer him in Wasa besides the great pike. I shall never believe it was well-roasted in the oven, for it is almost impossible not to have a twenty-pound pike either raw or burnt. Cousin ought to have circumstantially described that stone by the highway in Lochteå. It was very remarkable that the king ate breakfast right out-doors."

"Adolf Frederick did not do much that was remarkable," responded the Surgeon, "but still something more than eating breakfast in Lochteå. In his time the code was published in Finnish, and many of the Finnish towns obtained the right to trade at foreign ports, although the old burgher king did not live to see the day when the seed of his long life bore fruit. King Adolf Frederick was a noble man, and deserved to live in calmer times. But in his time people had no pity. A king sitting on his throne had to be an idol, whether he was born for the turning-lathe or the crown. In the realm of Sweden, he bore the blame and the honor, though many an imperial councilor, and many a burgomaster, in secret committee, was mightier than he. Now-a-days"

"Now-a-days," interposed grandmother, "the government bears the blame, the ministers the power, and the newspapers the honor."

The Surgeon smiled. "Not with us," said he. "But the sea, which has denied to the coasts of Sweden the ebb and flow of the tide, has instead put ebb and flow into the history of this country. Democracy and monarchy, democracy and aristocracy, have never been quite able to counterpoise each other, and in Adolf Frederick's time liberty foamed like half-fermented ale. Then was seen the marvel of the people and the nobility seeming to confederate against the king. But it

was only in seeming ; for at heart the people, now as always, sided with the king, and that was the source of that abundance of compliment. It was the aristocracy who ruled in the name of the people,—no longer, however, the old aristocracy of birth, but a diet-aristocracy of all ranks, patrician and plebeian, prelates, burgo-masters, sturdy peasants,—in short, party-leaders with their trains, three-fourths of whom lived by foreign bribes. To such people, the party was everything, but the country a painted sign.”

“Most humbly thanking you there, the devil, Brother Svenonius, has his model-writers !” exclaimed Captain Svanholm, the postmaster, with a broad smile.

“We have to make the acquaintance of the great Linnæus, notwithstanding,” responded the school-master, glad to possess at least one sheet-anchor, in the general shipwreck which threatened the time of liberty.

“And Eric Ljung, who killed the snake !” cried Monsieur Jonathan from his footstool.

“And Erica Lindelia, who boiled eggs ! And the little prince who dressed in disguise !” piped Elizabeth Gret in her turn.

“And Esther Larsson !” warmly interposed Anne Sophie. “She was the very daughter of her father, and a little more besides ; do you not think so, grandmother ?”

“Well, I will admit that,” replied grandmother. “The stiff-necked burgher king I never could quite get along with ; and the daughter was not much more to my fancy, when she was romping about in the woods, with the garter of the queen of the mist, and so on. But I am glad that the girl got to be somebody—and it was high time. Why, the creature was twenty-nine years old when she was married. That was the second wedding we have been present at, for all the history we have heard here by the fire ; and that is what I call a proper ending for young folks’ foolishness. It does

not surprise me that she was so aristocratically married, since her father was rich. The curious part of it was that the count took the inheritance so lightly. I know counts and barons who are more careful about the inventory; but you see the greedy family liked that. If I had been in Count Bertelsköld's place, I should have looked out that they did not put old damask in place of new, and perhaps farrow cattle instead of the six milch cows. Well, I hope the count and countess are in good health, and have a competence. Above all things, cousin must tell us more about little Prince Gustaf. He was a bright child, a little spoiled perhaps, but that was his mother's fault. Queen Louisa was never a person to be trifled with."

"Yes," said the Surgeon, "and yet here in Finland she has left behind her the most pious memory in the meek little town Lovisa."

"Are you very secretive, godfather?" inquired Anne Sophie.

"Well, what is the question about this time?"

"I would like to know who has the king's ring."

"Eric Ljung! Eric Ljung!" shouted four or five of the little ones, in chorus.

"That will be seen," said the Surgeon. "We have come to that time when old unbelief began to wear away, and to be replaced by a new superstition, which called itself enlightenment or philosophy."

At these words, the schoolmaster's eyes were opened wide with just astonishment, and Abiel Halm's cheeks were suffused with the purple of anger.

"Is enlightenment superstition?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, why not?" responded the Surgeon. "I have seen many a gold coin that was made of copper. One of the most superstitious that ever existed was named Voltaire."

"Shades of heroes!" ejaculated even the postmaster, while the learned in the company could not recover from their astonishment.

“Have a little patience, and do not burn your lips before the soup is boiled!” said old grandmother, merrily. “Begin, only begin, cousin, and put in a little salt now and then—it can do no harm. I think this is going to be first rate to listen to”

The Surgeon began.

CHAPTER I.

DOCTOR MARTIN.

ONE fine afternoon in the early part of the month of May, Anno Mundi 1771, the spring sun was shining gloriously over old Åbo. Around the tall, gleaming, copper-covered court-house tower, the black jackdaws were flying more industriously than ever, with straws for building; the lately freed Aura rushed with turbid but glittering waves under its bridges, and the students came, in merry, noisy crowds from the lectures of the planting-director, Professor Gadd, of the botanical garden. Åbo was bright with the dawning splendor of the days of its academic prosperity, and the black crape, which was here and there worn by distinguished persons around the arm or hat, (for the country was at that time in mourning for its king,) was scarcely observed. Good King Adolf Frederick had died the twelfth of the last February, in Stockholm. One day, when he had eaten hetvägg, sourkrout and curds for dinner, he swooned at his quadrille-table in the evening, and a few minutes afterward bade farewell forever to both Hats and Caps. Sincerely did Finland sorrow for that gentle sire, and the first periodicals of the land were on that account dedicated with many tearful lays,—though the sensitive poets could not possibly let the sun alone :

“ The sun has set at last which lighted up our sky.”
or :

“ Thus have we seen that sun go down
Which was the joy of all the North,
And fairest gem in night's bright crown,”

it was assuredly the sincere thought of their hearts
when they sung how

“ Better king there cannot be,”

and how

“ Kind his eye, his pious nature
Ever in his voice was heard ;
Noble care of every creature
In his virtuous bosom stirred.”

After which came a harangue to the rising sun :

“ Oh, our Gustaf, great and gracious !
Never yet the mournful tear
Hath the realm of Sweden spacious
Wept above thy glorious peer.”

All this, however, was the order of nature. An old sun had gone down at night, a new one was mounting above the horizon, and there was nothing else to be said about it than that the new sun was at present on his travels, and was expected home. Good old Åbo therefore need not long hang the head or wrangle in the court-house : it entered heartily into the troubles of the times under the administration of the Caps, and, like the whole country, looked for better times at the dawn of a rising day.

Through one window, however, the glad spring sun had not power to pierce, and that was in a dilapidated old house in the vicinity of Aningais gate. That window was impenetrably covered with a thick brown curtain, or rather a covering nailed fast on the inside, and passers-by regarded it with wondering, timid, suspicious eyes. It may, perhaps, interest the reader to cast a glance behind that curtain.

That dilapidated one-story house was owned by the widow of a burgher, who, however, did not occupy it

herself, but for the last year had rented it to a singular old stranger, who had come to Åbo, it was not known whence, and who was called by the few who knew him, by way of honor, Doctor Martin Weis. But as the title of doctor was in Åbo too great a dignity to be wasted on a personage whom many suspected of being a German barber's man, not to speak of anything worse, it more frequently happened that by way of mockery his sounding name was translated and he was called Martin the Wise, or plainly The Wise, by which appellation he was also best known in the neighborhood. He was said to be a physician by occupation, although no one had seen him practice; but when he produced a regular passport from Frankfort or Hamburg, whichever it may have been, and for further guaranty submitted to a *colloquium familiare* with Professor Johan Haartman, which is said to have resulted in the wonderful surprise of that renowned physician, no lawful reason was found for preventing Martin the Wise from taking up his abode in the old house, and there shutting himself in with an old man-servant, who was, if possible, even more taciturn and inaccessible than the master himself. No one knew with what he there busied himself, but the neighbors made various wonderful guesses, when they found the door bolted all day long, but always saw a faint firelight shining at night through the cracks around the covered window. One or another who from curiosity attempted to peep through the cracks even ventured to assert that he smelt brimstone in there, and that discovery was not calculated to inspire the superstitious neighbors with more confidence.

It is into the innermost of the three rooms which constituted the Wise Martin's habitation that we now venture to cast a glance. Judging from the outside, not a single beam of the bright spring sunshine would have been able to make its way through the barricades of the window; but that was not quite the case. Upon

entering that extraordinary room, it was seen to be half-illuminated from two points: first from an enormous walled, iron-plate furnace, which occupied half of the room, and in which a great coal-fire was glowing; and next from a scarcely perceptible round hole in the window-post, through which a slender sunbeam of dazzling brightness fell on a glass retort, which seemed solely calculated to receive the ray. The effect of this illumination, three-fourths the light from the coals and one-fourth sunshine, all that environment of night-black shadows from the dark walls completely covered with shelves and unfamiliar dimly-seen objects, would have been the despair of an unsuccessful artist and the rapture of him who succeeded in copying it on canvas.

In that double glow, a little, crooked man, apparently between fifty and sixty years of age, clad in the wig and queue, brown wide-skirted coat with large buttons, short brown small-clothes long, silk stockings, and shoes with broad silver buckles, the ordinary costume of that time, was slowly moving about. He had tied a leather apron before him, and in his hand he carried a pair of tongs, with which he sometimes placed a crucible to his better satisfaction on the coals. His small, penetrating gray eyes seemed attentively to follow the work of the fire. That which occupied his thoughts was evidently something important. After awhile he went to the glass retort, which for a moment had been abandoned by the shifting sunbeam. He moved it into the light again, he examined its contents with the greatest attention, and shook his head with dissatisfaction.

“*Nondum vita!*” sighed he. “*Quousque tandem mors prævalebit?*”

CHAPTER II.

THE LIFE SPARK.

THE sunbeam in the dark room slowly continued to move, as its shining source changed position in the heavenly arch ; and at the same time the bay-window post, with its aperture, was turned by an ingenious mechanism so that the beam always fell directly in. Its path in the room was denoted by a dial, divided off into degrees, and drawn full of mystic quadrates and circles.

When the beam approached the extreme edge of the dial, the faint sound of a bell was heard, and the old man turned around. At that moment the light fell brightly on his face, and in that double illumination showed a prominent aquiline nose, rugged cheeks, a furrowed brow, and extremely energetic, gloomy, severe features. He might have been taken for Tuoni, the monarch of the subterranean world, lighted and dazzled by that sunbeam which Lemminkäinen's mother knew how to allure down to his dark kingdom.

A person had entered the room, and now stepped out of the shadow into the firelight glimmering from the furnace. It was an exceedingly handsome young man, scarcely eighteen years of age, clad in a finer blue coat than youths of his age used to wear in Åbo. But this coat was dusty, the fine neckcloth carelessly tied, the cuffs torn, the shoes soiled, the hair in disorder, the hat awry, the handsome, resolute countenance very pale, and the eyes too lustrous. He advanced with rapid, almost defiant steps, threw off the three-cornered hat, and said : " Here I am, doctor ! "

" I have been expecting you," calmly replied the doctor.

“Expecting me?” repeated the youth. “How did you know it? When I left you yesterday, I swore never to return.”

“Young man, that is in vain—you are following your destiny. I knew that you would come, but I did not call you. I force my friendship on no one. You can go; I do not need you.”

“And you tell me that as indifferently as if you were driving a beggar out-doors! Was it not you who first permitted me to look into the abyss of scientific secrets, and like the serpent of Paradise tempted me with the tree of knowledge? Before I knew you, doctor, I was an unquiet, thirsting soul, who nowhere found a goal and a rest. But I was pure, I was virtuous; then I could still read my mother’s letters and write to her again. Now I can no longer do that. I am consumed by a fire which I do not understand. I am like that furnace—flames within and dross without. And you have that on your conscience, doctor. It was you who taught me to defy the human race, to place myself above it. I have obeyed you too well. Would to God I had never known you!”

“Calm yourself, young man. It is not I whom you should blame for your sins. On the contrary, I am the one who will teach you to make amends for them. In you is the germ of something great. Explore, and you will go far—farther perhaps than I, farther than many mortals before you have gone, into the secrets of nature!”

“Explore, do you say? Explore! And if I became wiser than King Solomon, if I even learned to penetrate into the inmost parts of the earth, what would it avail me, when my very soul is bleeding? Do you know what I have done, doctor? I have played”

“Fool! Did I command you to do that?”

“Command? Ah! you very well know that I do not obey any commands. But you instructed me yesterday in the art of geomancy. You taught me to

reckon all possibilities. You taught me to control chance. Oh, it is a glorious art ! you said. By it the slave is transformed to master—a man to God. Very well, thought I last evening, as I walked past that private *biribi* club you know, over there on Tavast street. Not that I care about gold—what would I do with gold?—but I wanted to test that beautiful new art which rules the world, and is so extremely useful for everything. Unfortunately I had with me three hundred rix-dollars, which my foster father requested me to deliver to the treasurer of the university. The money belonged to Provost Larsson, and was a part of the salary for the pastorate of Pükki, which is to be paid day after to-morrow at the latest. Well, how do you suppose it went with my rare art and the three hundred rix-dollars ? We alternated with *biribi* and *rouge et noir*. I won and lost, won and lost, and after I had punted in that manner nearly a day and night, I at last found my pockets empty.”

“ Fool ! ”

“ Do not rail at me, doctor, for I am now in no mood to tolerate it from you ! As I came out of the gaming-house the clock in the court-house tower struck four. The sun was shining gloriously, and the birds were singing. Well, it is true you know how to take the very sun captive. But it was winter within me. Do you know how terrible it is to stand in the sunshine, and amid the songs of birds, with a debt on the conscience ? Then it occurred to me that I ought to seek you again, and here I am. You can make gold—it is a trifling matter for you. Make me three hundred rix-dollars by the day after to-morrow early, and I shall thank you as long as I live.”

The doctor listened to him with increasing patience. Instead of replying he led the youth to the now rapidly vanishing sunbeam, once more examined the contents of the retort, shook his head and said:

“ Put your hand on the retort ! ”

The youth mechanically obeyed. The mystery of this act caused him for a moment to forget his own troubles.

“Do you see that sunbeam?” said the singular man. “For sixty-eight minutes and fourteen seconds it has labored in vain to light the spark of life in the elements, and now but four minutes and fifty-four seconds remain. If the spark is not lighted before that time, the life of a high personage is to be extinguished, and that is the end of many hopes. We will now try the last resort, and that is the vital warmth from your young hand. My hand is too cold. Everything depends upon your concentrating your will.”

The young man shivered in every joint. That curious glass vessel seemed so freezing cold that it robbed his hand of every atom of warmth. He felt as though a part of his own life was being exhausted, and he knew not whither or for whom.

He watched the retort. Its contents underwent a rapid change. The gray dust-like mass, which had hitherto filled somewhat more than half the vessel, had begun a kind of effervescence and was changing color. A bright red, blood-like mass was developed within it, and rose higher and higher until it filled the whole retort. The brow of the doctor brightened.

“It succeeds,” he whispered; “fifteen, sixteen, seventeen seconds—see how the vital spirits rise!—Eighteen, nineteen—now they reach the brim!—Twenty!—still a surplus of life to react against the consequences!—Twenty-one, twenty-two—now it is enough! Away with your hand, or the retort will burst!”

The young man obeyed. Benumbed and half-powerless, he sunk down on a tripod standing near.

“I thank you,” said the master, “you have answered my expectation. Come back to-morrow night at eleven o’clock, and you shall have gold.”

“I am no longer able!” stammered the young man, deathly pale and nearly swooning.

“Do not be disturbed; it is an accidental minus in the functions of life, which at your age is easily restored. Here—drink this!” and he handed the fainting youth a little bottle filled with a golden liquid of the clearest transparency.

The young man drank and felt his benumbed veins coursed by fire. The color returned to his cheeks, and his expiring eyes regained their luster.

“That was a good drink, doctor,” said he, drawing breath with delight. “Can you also make medicine for a bad conscience?”

“Perhaps!” said the singular man, with a smile. “Do not forget to-morrow evening at the stroke of eleven!”

“I shall come.”

CHAPTER III.

SURUTOIN.

SOUTH of the Aura, beside old Åbo, eight mountains of greater or less height arise,—Klosterberg, Vårdberg, and whatever their names may have been, for though all of them have at some time had their own remarkable names, several of them have long since been forgotten. Those sterile heights have long defied all attempts at cultivation and smoothing, until in our days gunpowder has got the better of some of them, and assiduous care finally succeeded in covering others with thick plantings around the watch-tower of the stars. At the time of this story they still rose for the greater part in their original wildness, but at their southern termination, where Korpelais street and Arsenei street (a name which greatly resembles poison), now force their way, there were, as early as the year

1771, a few farms occupied by poor laboring people, and surrounded by fields of cabbages or turnips alternating with green hop-yards. Not far away, on the same side, and thus a little distance from the town proper, there was at this time a good-sized, neatly-hedged garden, with a comfortable little yellow-painted dwelling-house and a couple of hot-houses, with their appurtenances of isolated, well-tended hot-beds—in short, a little country place, as bright, pleasant and summer-green as ever a tired denizen of a city wished, when he wearied of the dust of the streets, and which besides had all the advantages of town and country at once. Over that quiet habitation lay a spirit of peace, innocence and beauty. Hither came no bleak north winds, for those which hurled themselves hither on cool wings across the craggy mountains had been transformed to gentle breezes before they went to rest in the crowns of the oaks. Here it would seem the conflicts of life broke powerless against the sheltering inclosure; here all the anxieties of life exhaled as lightly as the vapors from the moist hot-beds in the sunshine. Here thrived no bad thought, no evil being; here dwelt good spirits, happy people, without envy or sorrow; and therefore that little dwelling with its garden over on the mountain was called *Surutoin*, the *Sans souci* of the Finns.

And the people who lived at *Surutoin* were not only good but industrious. Perhaps in all wide Finland there were not to be found such a well-tended garden, such finely sanded walks, such handsome oaks, maples and lindens, such luxuriant plum and apple trees, such well cared for berry-bushes and acacia hedges, such well poled hop-yards and peas-beds, and such carefully brought up rose-shoots. There was still more. There were rare foreign south-European, American, and East Indian plants in the hot-houses, from coffee and tea bushes to the cotton plant, the mulberry tree with its silk-worms, and the sugar-cane, which through the high glass windows absorbed sweet-

ness from the sunshine. There was a legion of many colored flowers—no, not a legion but nearer a thousand were they,—which drew their perfume out of their stern Finnish mountains, that to ignorance, poverty or sloth only grant the scanty lichen; and in this realm of beautiful unfolding daughters of Flora, now shy, now luxuriant, now pale, now gorgeous, hummed many thousands of sociable little bees, which, like the good of earth, sucked honey from poison itself, and collected their treasures in a little city of elegant hives built in rows beside the hot-houses.

If at this delineation of the realm of the flowers in Surutoin the reader chance to remember another more magnificent flower-kingdom, governed by a mightier king away across the sea, on the plains of Upland, in Sweden, he may perhaps guess that Surutoin was only a modest, but not on that account less lovely, copy of Hammarby—a distant dependency under the great universal monarchy of the flower-king; and he will not guess wrongly.

Four children, from three to nine years of age, are playing in the garden. They are well trained, they know how they ought to act, and are careful not to run across the well-weeded flower-beds. It does not occur to them to pull up the peas-poles, to grab a handful of the Indian cresses, or to tickle each other under the nose with stolen mint. They are careful also not to go too near the bee-hives, but they are assuredly not out of spirits about it, for they fly like wild fowl over the walks, climb the trees, play at leap-frog on the grass-plats, and display a surprising dexterity in the noble art of rolling hoop.

Then occurs one of those little sorrows of life, from which not even Surutoin seems to have been altogether exempt, but which resemble those light clouds that only enhance the splendor of the blue spring sky. The youngest girl, a little snub-nosed, ruddy dumpling, has been sitting behind a bush, and unfortunately on

one of those small ant hills which the owner of Surutoin keeps for the sole purpose of protecting the garden against caterpillars. The ants are insulted by this temerity, or else take the poor child for a large hostile insect, which comes to disturb their domestic quiet. They bestir themselves for defence; they begin to climb up the little shoe, and so on up the stocking, till their presence becomes too perceptible, and the girl springs up with a cry of terror. Pursued by a hundred inaccessible tormentors, against which no resistance is possible, she runs screaming over the walks, until she trips on her untied shoe-string, turns a somerset, and strikes her little snub-nose against the soft sand.

The rest of the sisters and brothers hasten frightened to the spot. They have heard much about snakes; they have seen snakes—but in alcohol. They take it for granted that sister has been bitten, and the eldest boy arms himself with a stick to club the monster, while the younger ones lift up the still screaming little one. All weep and wail, and there is general hubbub and lamentation in sorrowless Surutoin.

A man then comes out of the hot-house near by. He is a handsome, powerful man, between thirty and forty years of age, somewhat prematurely bowed and a little near-sighted. He is bare-headed, in his shirt-sleeves, without neck-tie, and carries in his hand some strips of cloth, with which he has been tying his plants to their supports. Astonishment is depicted in his mild, sympathetic countenance. He does not believe the girl has been bitten by a snake, but he thinks she has been stung by bees. Such a thing sometimes happens at Surutoin.

While he, himself in doubt, vainly seeks to console the little one, who will not listen to reason, and still continues to scream at the top of her voice, his wife, a few years younger than himself, comes from the house, with hastier steps also than are perhaps her wont, but calm and clear-headed, and without a symptom of the

fidgets. She is no beauty, but far from ill-looking, with a kind, healthy, agreeable, blooming face, intelligent, warm and animated eyes, and full form, with a tendency to stoutness. Her garb is plain and unconstrained, but well cared for. She lifts the screaming child to her bosom, wipes away its tears, wipes the sand from the little snub-nose, and with accustomed hand examines the cause of the pain. It is not long before she has discovered the ants and brushed off the worst disturbers of peace.

“There, there! Don’t cry any more, Rose May!” says she. “It is all right now, and we will go in and take off your clothes, so you can bathe in your own little bath-tub.”

At these words the little one feels safe. She stops crying, throws her arms around her mother’s neck, and there is sunshine after the shower. Rose May is charming when she laughs, and the father, with undisguised admiration, looks alternately at the pretty child and the brisk and blooming mother.

“It is always so!” he says with a happy face,—“when I am at my wit’s end, you know just what to do. You are like no one else, Erica! It was well that it was not the bees, for I should have been sorry to sell the hives.”

“Are you a naturalist?” laughingly exclaimed his wife. “When did you ever see bees creep into shoes and stockings? And your ant-hills, you know, are too insufferable. You might as well plant *Carduus acanthoides* here in the garden to get rid of *Tussilago farfara*. I do not know whether you deserve anything so rare as what I now have for you. Guess if you can!”

And at this she triumphantly holds a large letter in her outstretched hand.

“That is from my great master, Linnæus!” exclaimed Eric Ljung, in glad surprise.

“Yes it *does* almost look as if it might be from uncle,” replies his wife, Erica Lindelia, with merry pride.

CHAPTER IV.

A GLANCE BACKWARD AT OLD FRIENDS.

LITTLE Surutoin, where we again so unexpectedly found two old friends, was an outgrowth of the period of utility, and one of those mirrors in which the genius of the times loved to behold and admire itself. When the kingdom of Sweden, and Finland in its lap, had, fifty years before our story, fallen from the summit of its political greatness, and lost a third of its territory, it was necessary to be resolved on healing the deep wound, and regaining in internal prosperity what the kingdom had lost in external power. Then appeared here in the North the period of tillage, of peaceful land conquest, and one of its favorite terms was the word economy. But to economy belonged not only the national and rural economy proper, but also all those sciences which are of practical use in agriculture, trade and industry, and consequently occupy the first place as natural sciences. Everything tending in that direction was encouraged by the government and upheld by public opinion, since Celsius and the great Linnæus here marched at the head of the tendency of the times. Everywhere experiments were being made in chemical laboratories, botanic gardens, collections of animals and plants, physical observation, dissecting-rooms, observatories, barometers, thermometers, water-marks, saltpetre sheds, potash mines, forges, economic societies, trades-unions, work-shops, etc. It pertained not only to utility, but was also a matter of fashion. A strong

wind swept under the wings of the natural sciences, and they began to soar toward undreamed-of heights, at the same time that those with the microscope crept along the ground, or with the powder-drill made their way to the inner parts of the earth. Of nineteen academic treatises, published in Åbo during the year 1771, the contents of ten were natural history or economy, among them one by Lebell on the scarcity of money, one by Sourander on lime for walls, one by Sundelin on how the trade of Nystad should be repaired, one by Gjers on how the salmon-fishery of the river Kumo might be improved, etc. Among the remaining nine disputations are to be found Gadd's "Sundry remarks in explanation of Swedish jurisprudence," and "Chemical observations touching *juris prudentia optificiaria*."

People watched the signs of the times.

Botany, which was especially in fashion, must be practical like all the rest. There was great endeavor to introduce useful vegetables from America, and Finland will ever gratefully remember the introduction of potatoes. It was also particularly for the cultivation of such eatable or medicinal plants that the many botanical gardens of that time were founded.

Our friend Eric Ljung, the aforetime student of Strengnäs, and afterward of Åbo, with royal stipend, had done honor to his great teacher. With his herbarium under his arm, his knapsack on his back, and a few plåts more or less in his pocket, he had wandered through Finland, Sweden, and the greater part of Europe, and afterwards, on a Wasa ship with the new staple-freedom, plowed the salt billows of the ocean to Rio Janeiro. He had then forced his way through the primeval forests of South America, among people white, red and black, everywhere gathering seeds and plants, toads and beet-snakes and vampires, electric eels, variegated parrots, vipers, and other rarities of the same nature, until on his master's account and his own he had sent home

several thousand curiosities of all kinds, and at least a hundred species of both plants and animals before unknown in Europe. For all this he had succeeded in winning many enviable distinctions. Grass and beetles had been named after him *Ljungii*; he had become corresponding member of a great number of learned societies in both hemispheres, and what was more, he had had the honor of his master's paternal friendship, and of being regarded as one of that great man's most excellent pupils. Higher than this, Eric Ljung's ambition did not extend. He was content—he was happy; he bored into the vegetable kingdom like a bumblebee into a wild briar blossom, and thought of the morrow no more than a young pine troubles itself about the autumn storms,—until he one day saw Erica Lindelia again, at her uncle's at Hammarby.

She was at that time twenty-three years old, and he was twenty-six. Both were passionate botanists, both free and sorrowless as honeysuckles in the morning dew. The old friendship leaped into flame, and before they knew it they were betrothed. It took place without ado or hesitancy; the uncle's consent was asked and obtained, and from that day he began in his usual lovable way to call them his *dicotyledons*. Erica Lindelia now grew with two heart-leaves, and as she had from childhood hated *polygamia superflua*, she now the more zealously studied the despised *Hippuris*, which among our more common plants is the only one which has the honor of uniting the class *monandria* with the order *monogynia*.

There was only one "if" and one "but" in the way of their happiness, and that was that neither of them owned anything in the wide world, except a happy disposition, a faithful heart, and a remarkable collection of plants. For the first time Eric Ljung lamented the loss of all hopes in the burgher king's inheritance, and for the first time Erica Lindelia made the discovery that in botany the eatable quality of

plants plays an important *rôle*. The excellent uncle, however, was equal to any emergency. Nothing was needed but a signal from him to Queen Louisa Ulrica, supported by a courteous letter to the omnipotent Hats in the council, to get his pupil appointed plantation-director, with the commission of founding and maintaining, at the expense of the government, a garden for the acclimating of useful plants at the town of Åbo.

Who then was happier than the young *dicotyledons*—*thalami-floræ*, as the archiater, to the great vexation of Erica, afterwards called them! Without further circumlocution, they became husband and wife; the wedding took place one fine May-day at Hammarby farm, and, among many other distinguished guests, Count Bertelsköld was on this occasion seen to lead the wife of Archiater Linnæus in the minuet, while the great archiater, with the same gallantry, extended his hand to Countess Bertelsköld. Another near relation had also come to the wedding, and that was Eric's mother, the aforetime beauty, now sixty years of age,—Marie Larsson, as we will continue to call her;—but, as she regarded her time for dancing to be past, having danced too much at Stockholm forty years before, she was happy now, unobserved, and with maternal pride, to be able to watch her darling.

After this glad day, plantation-director Ljung with his young wife had moved to Åbo, and there founded the beautiful Surutoin, with a care, skill and taste, which, if it would not be regarded less useful in point of food than the kingdom of Flora was represented to the eye, the organs of smell, and science in general, quite as much as for the special benefit of the kitchen and industry, perfectly justified the confidence of the government. Of the good things of this life, the young pair had just as much as they needed for their humble dwelling; and when, with two girls and two boys, there gradually arose a greater demand for vict-

uals, the plantation-director understood excellently how to plant more cabbages, spinach, carrots, apple trees, and gooseberry bushes, of which the proceeds (for that was allowed by the government) was sufficient for just as many pairs of little shoes, and just as much groats to the porridge, et cetera, as the increase of the family rendered necessary. Surutoin was always in animated correspondence with Hammarby, which was every little while varied with gifts of different kinds of rarities; and thus passed ten happy years, wonderfully without a single sorrow, unless such small vexations are reckoned as that one of little Rose May's to-day.

"Do you know what day this is?" asked Erica of her husband, after all Rose May's ants had been drowned in the bath tub, and the little snub nose, shining like a full moon, continued to plash in the water so that it showered around her mother.

"It is the eighth of May—we have got to pole the beans," replied the plantation director.

"The beans? My dear sir husband, I think a man can pole his beans without himself being a garden-pole. Shame on you! You are altogether hardened, and would do for timber for the late king to turn boxes out of. All day long I have kept a memory to myself, merely to test how far your obduracy would go, and you have not said so much to me as, 'Give me a kiss!'"

"To-day, let's see—where in the world have I been keeping my thoughts? Why, it is the tenth anniversary of our wedding. There!—now I have taken my right! God be praised for these ten years, and that for just a decade to-day He has granted me a *dicotyledon* whose equal is not to be found in the primeval forests of America. Do you know, I once had a dream. It was two months after I found that ring, you know, and I had lately obtained a stipend here in Åbo. But I ought not to speak of such things to-day, when we have so much occasion to rejoice."

“Tell me—I am not one of the nervous sort,” merrily replied his wife.

“Of course it was only a fancy. ‘Dreams are like streams.’ I dreamed that the maternal ancestor of the Bertelskölds came to me, looking as I had often heard her described in my childhood, and said to me, ‘Give me back my ring, and I will give you ten happy years.’ I would not do so, and as she was importunate, I swore and protested that I did not have the ring at all. Then she went on to say, ‘Now you have sworn falsely, and must lose the ring; but since you did it unconsciously, in a dream, I will still give you the ten years.’ The following morning it occurred to me to look for the ring, which I had laid in my mirror-casket; but it was gone, and no human being knew the least thing about what had afterwards become of it. Was it not a singular dream?”

“Bless your heart! I dream such things at least once a week. But if my will is yours, we will celebrate the day by baking pancakes for the children. They are the very rarest plants which in these ten years the good God has let grow at Surutoin!”

CHAPTER V.

THE FOSTER SON.

“NO, it will not do at all!” protested the wife of plantation-director Ljung, with much decision, after she had read Archiater Linnæus’ letter over her husband’s shoulder. “Send you to Africa! Uncle is a great man—that I will not dispute—but then great men can sometimes be a little thick-headed.”

“There is more than one way of viewing it,” responded Eric, as he again read the letter through,

from beginning to end. "The government is again going to send a frigate with presents to the Dey of Algiers."

"That is a despicable thing for the government to do. Shall a free people send tribute to pirates, in order that our ships may not be captured and our sailors sold as slaves in the Barbary States?"

"It is not commendable, but it is regarded as politic. However, an expedition in the interest of natural history goes to Algiers with the ambassador, and the archiater proposes to place me at its head!"

"And what will become of me?" asked Erica, half weeping.

"Go along!"

"I? And what would become of the children?"

"That is so. I did not think of the children. But we could take them to my mother's for that length of time."

"Your mother is seventy years old, and you want to send her four babies, who need watching every moment! No, my dear, it will not do. Invent some other plan."

"We will leave them here with Cilla and old Agatha."

"Cecilia Larsson is fifteen years old, and taken as a boarder with us from her father, Provost Larsson. Our trusty Agatha is fifty years old, and knows excellently how to take care of cows, but not the least about tending children. Oh, you wise gentlemen and married men! What sagacious expedients you hit upon with your great learning! What then would become of Surutoin while we were away?"

"I had not thought of that either. We might persuade Peter Gadd."

"Professor Gadd has a large botanical garden of his own, and looks upon Surutoin as a plaything. But suppose he should do as you wish, and take care of Surutoin, what would you do with Paul? What would you do with Paul Bertelsköld?"

“ I should take him along, if his parents would give their consent. I want to tell you something, Erica. I am troubled about that boy. For a while back he has been getting strange things into his head. He must get out into the atmosphere of the wide world, where foolish fancies are blown away.”

“ Well, thank God that you have finally got your eyes open! How often have I told you that Paul is no longer as he used to be! But you have continually replied that he was studying! Do you really believe that he has been studying?”

“ What else could he have been doing? There is not such a head to be found in our whole university. It is now three years since we received him from his parents, for two hundred rix-dollars a year, on the condition that for five years he should be as our own son, and that we should tame his wild, ungovernable disposition. We have succeeded beyond expectation, or rather, you have succeeded, for he obeys you like a child. But I have followed his studies, step by step, and I have been surprised—I have been astonished. He has learned everything with a wonderful ease, and as quickly as a game. In Latin, he can vie with old Hassel and young Porthan; in mathematics, with Valenius and Lindquist; in metaphysics, with Mesterton; in the natural sciences, with Gadolin, Kalm, Haartman, and Gadd”

“ But not with you!”

“ All the more, with me. And all that at eighteen years of age. It is more than natural. What, some day, is to become of such a student?”

“ A madman,—that is what I have always said, and the beginning is already made. But you are so extremely fond of Paul. You are so proud of him that you incessantly lay new fuel on that fire which is consuming him, and are continually saying to him, ‘ Study! study!’ It is the same as, ‘ Puzzle your head! puzzle your head!’ ”

“I say, ‘Do not study!’ I say, ‘Investigate!’ I have done everything to cool him with calm, empiric observation. I have said to him, ‘Study life, for life is more than a book!’ And for that reason I now wish to take him abroad with me.”

“I have nothing against that, but I fear you do not know how such a burning spirit must be treated. You believe he is impelled by an insatiable desire for knowledge, but I tell you the evil genius of ambition has obtained power over him, and he wishes to shine as a resplendent luminary above all others, and such luminaries usually go out quickly in darkness. What is he about when he is sometimes away all day long? Is he studying? I hardly think so. Does he attend the lectures? For a month no one has seen him listening to any one! Then what is he doing! And indeed it is necessary for me to speak about something—though I had resolved to keep silent for the present—last night he was not at home. I have not seen him since yesterday in the afternoon.”

“You are right. It is very singular.”

“And yet we have received him as our own child, and must be answerable for him as for our own. He is Countess Esther’s only son, for I will not speak of her stepson. Think, Eric! What if her most precious child should be lost while in our keeping!”

“I shudder when I think of it. Is he then to be that disturber of peace which, after ten calm, happy years, is for the first time to bring sorrow and trouble to our peaceful Surutoin? No, we will believe nothing so bad about our beautiful, our richly-gifted Paul—my pride, my delight. But you are more sharp-sighted than I. You are only too right that his is a burning soul, and we must associate with him as with fire. Advise me! What shall we do?”

“For a beginning, we must know what now occupies his thoughts. Can it be has fallen in love?”

“With Cecilia? That pious, gentle, dreaming

mignonette? Impossible! Besides, she is nothing but a child, you know."

"There are other girls in Åbo, older and more coquettish—Eva Lindquid, for example. She is handsome and witty—fire and flames, like Paul."

"It is possible. God grant he may be up to his ears in love, for that is a disease of childhood which passeth away with years."

"Indeed? Do you think so?"

"Yes, that is, the disease changes the nature, and becomes a means of health, as in our case, for example. But for youths at Paul's age, love is a protecting angel that saves from many errors. I now remember something which makes me uneasy. Yesterday I handed Paul quite a large sum of money, which he was to pay into the university on Larsson's account. It was a part of the lease for the pastorate of Pükki."

"How incautious of you! What does he know of the value of money? It represents to him only so many figures, like other figures. You ought to find out immediately if it was duly delivered. And above all things, try to get on track of the poor boy. I shall have no peace until we know he is again in the right path."

"Nor I either. I will go to town immediately."

And, with troubled heart, Eric Ljung went to seek his lost foster son.

CHAPTER VI.

STORMY THOUGHTS.

WHILE plantation-director Ljung and his wife were, like faithful friends, confiding to each other all their troubles, there was walking under the oaks in the garden an inhabitant of Surutoin as yet

unknown to the reader. It was a charming blonde girl, with healthful complexion and bounding step, clad in homespun woolen cloth of gray ground, and a neck-cloth of the same over her head. She carried a watering-pot in her hand and some knitting in her dress pocket. The whole afternoon she had had the important charge of superintending the women who were weeding a remote part of the garden, so that they should not pull up the plants with the weeds, and she was now making a detour to see if the children had peradventure left the back gate open to stray cattle.

Lower and lower toward the rose-tinted, glittering waves of the Erstan sunk the late May sun, as Cecilia Larsson, or Cilla, as she was called—for it was she—in passing ascended a hillock, where, through a valley between the mountains, she saw the town and the cathedral glistening in the splendor of declining day. Was she waiting for any one, or why did she for awhile stand so still, with her gaze toward the town? Probably she did not herself know, but it pleased her to stand there. She sat down on a little rustic seat, and thoughtfully—or thoughtlessly—watched, now the dance of the gnats in the sunshine, and now the darting flight of the newly arrived swallows.

While she was thus sitting in the spring evening, without exactly knowing why, a young man was approaching with long strides behind her on the unbeaten cross-road on the mountains, and before she observed it was standing at her side. She seemed surprised, and he the same; but now that they had met, neither could escape the other.

The young man was Paul Edgar Bertelsköld, son of Count Charles Victor Bertelsköld by his second wife, Esther Larsson, and thus a cousin to Cecilia, who was a daughter of the countess' brother Bertel. Both, as we know, had been taken as foster-children by their kinsman Ljung.

Paul was still in that somewhat untractable condi-

tion in which we saw him in the laboratory of the wise doctor, and was not at all in a mood to meet any one. He stopped abruptly, and asked what his cousin was "sitting there staring at."

Cilla had not been unaccustomed to impetuous and offensive expression from that tempestuous youth, but never before had she seen him like this. His disordered appearance and flaming eyes struck the innocent girl with bewilderment. In her terror she did not answer a word.

"Are you sitting here to spy me out?" he continued, irritated by her silence, and grasping her firmly by the arm.

The girl began to weep.

"Then you can do nothing but cry!" said Paul, as he thrust her disdainfully from him. "I do not comprehend why Nature has formed such paltry beings! Is it because you think that life is a rag, that you are continually washing it with your miserable tears? Oh, well! perhaps you are right. But I cannot endure that pitiful whining. Why are you sitting here?"

"For amusement," replied Cilla, trembling.

"For amusement? That is like you. We ought to know what we are about, and why we exist. But such are ye all—creeping ants are ye—and yet man can take down the stars of heaven. Why are you looking at me? Am I not handsome enough for you? Or are you looking at my dusty coat? Perhaps you are counting whether I still have on all the buttons? What do I care about your buttons? Go away! I have something else to think about."

"But what is the matter with you, Paul? What harm have I done you, that you speak like that?"

"What is the matter with me? Everything or nothing. I will not be an ant! I am tired of Åbo.—Yes, here we see it before us, like a dish of roasted herring beside a plate of peas-soup. That is something, you imagine! A rubbishy old rat-hole honored with

the title of castle, and an ornamented sepulchre which they call the cathedral. In the one, they fetter humanity with iron; in the other, with clerical dogmas. Hands and feet, thoughts and consciences—everything, they wish to bind. It is too miserable! Any one who will not be slave must be tyrant. There is not a free man in all Åbo but myself, and perhaps one more, but I am not yet certain of that. What do you say to my some day becoming bishop of Åbo? You, with your eternal whining and crying, might answer then for bishop's wife. But I will not be bishop! I will not creep to the crosier! I will not bend! They have blockheads enough in the university. Here there is a mountain upon me, but I will shake it off like cob-web. I have also a flash, though no one knows it yet. But they shall some day see it lighten, and the rat-house shall tremble, and the graves shall open, and the crosier shall fall, and the hair shall rise on the wooden heads of the wig-blocks."

"I do not understand you, Paul. You are dreadful to-day. Has any one done you ill, or why are you so angry?"

"You do not comprehend it. I have done myself ill, but that is why I am suffocating. I long for storm, tempest! I can no longer bear the pedants here and there! I cannot endure Surutoin,—it is so dolefully punctilious, and so miserably moral. Come away with me, Cilla! We will board the first boat that we find along the shore, and row out on the great sea,—not such a ditch as the Aura, or such a wash-dish as the Baltic, but the sea of the world! Yes, away there, on the great, blue ocean,—there we shall find refreshment, there we shall find calm!"

"Do you want to go away from aunt and uncle, who think so much of you! Have you the heart, Paul, to afflict those who are so kind to you?"

"I have no heart—I do not want any heart. What do I care about being caressed. There is a burning

in my head, a flame of fire is going through my soul, and I need an ocean to slake its glow. There! now you are crying again! Will you cease to trouble me with those dishwater feelings?"

"Paul, Paul! You are not doing right now. You must pray God that you may become humble."

"I humble? Is the mountain humble? Is the storm humble? Ask the volcano why the lava consumes the blossoms at its base! Why should I be humble? Why should I pray to God? If God has made me so that there is not room for me in a nutshell, he must see that I find a world where I will thrive. It is not my fault, Cilla, that I am not like others. When my mother was young she, too, was unlike all others. But I do not want to be bad. You will pardon me—I am very unhappy. I am alone in the world, and no one understands me."

"God will understand you, if you pray to him about it. Do you want me to pray with you?"

"Are you coming again with your tears and whining! I will not pray—I cannot pray! I want justice from God. I did not create the comet to go out of the eternal circle. It is terrible, but I cannot help it. I do not understand myself. Only one thing is clear to me—it must be otherwise with the world and with myself, or it will not do. I could snatch the globe out of its orbit and hurl it away into the infinite regions of the nebulæ, were it only to make everything different."

"Your mother will weep, Paul!"

"Do you think so? She is not the most easily melted. But it is possible she might do so. I might weep myself, if it were not so utterly pitiable. What a glorious woman is my mother! You ought to see her, Cilla, with her noble forehead and dark, gleaming, flashing eyes! When I was a child I used often to sit at her feet and look up to her as to a higher being, and I could sit thus for hours drinking in the splendor of her eyes. Then she would sometimes lay her hand or

my head and say, 'Paul, my son, pray God to give you great thoughts!'"

"But since then you have forgotten to pray."

"Yes, Cilla, perhaps it is wrong, but I forgot it a long time ago. Once I too could pray. I believed so much then. I could not eat if I did not say grace. I could not sleep if I did not say my prayer. I believed that invisible angels stood around my bed, and that the rainbow was the bridge of the blessed to Paradise. That was a happy time, Cilla, but it is past—forever past!" and the wild, tempestuous youth leaned his beauteous head in the arms of the girl and sobbed aloud.

Cecilia was very careful not to disturb his tears. She folded her childlike hands above his head and softly prayed: "O, Lord, let the light of thy countenance shine upon us! O, Lord, give us an eternal peace!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE TRANSGRESSOR AND HIS JUDGE.

THE sun had set, but it was still daylight when Paul Bertelsköld returned to his room in the yellow dwelling-house at Surutoin. He disdained the by-path behind the hot-houses by which he might have reached the steps unperceived, and walked up the wide, straight path, through the still leafless avenue of lindens, where he accidentally met his foster-father, who, angry and sorrowful, was returning from town. "Come," said the plantation director, "I have something to say to you."

Paul accompanied him, and they entered the work-room, which was in a corner of the house overlooking the garden. Two silver poplars, the only witnesses of

the judge and transgressor, shaded the window in the evening twilight.

“You have been away since yesterday afternoon,” began Eric Ljung, with a gloomy look.

“Yes,” replied Paul, looking him straight in the face.

“Where have you been?”

“Here and there. Most of the time at a gaming-house.”

“I know it. You have played away the three hundred rix-dollars I gave you yesterday to take to the treasurer.”

“I have. Half at *biribi*, half at *rouge et noir*.”

“Unhappy boy! You knew it was not your money. With what are you going to repay it?”

“I have means. To-morrow evening everything shall be cleared up.”

“In what way?”

“That is my business. I am no defrauder.”

“Are you sure of that? If you succeed in paying your debts it will be with new debts. Everything you possess belongs to your father.”

“I possess myself.”

“Are you very certain of that? You belong to your parents. You defraud them of their dearest hopes. You defraud yourself of your whole future. You defraud us who love you, and are responsible for your youth. You defraud your country, for which you are in duty bound to work as man and citizen. You defraud your Heavenly Father, who has endowed you with glorious gifts to carry out his work on earth. Paul! Paul! and you say you are no defrauder!”

For a moment the youth was silent, but his innate defiant disposition gained the mastery over his better feelings. “Yes,” he boldly replied, “that is what I say. I am no longer a child, to be led by the ear to the dunce-block. I am my own master, and if I stand here under police examination, it is of my free will. I answer

because I do not wish to make myself better than I am, but no one shall compel me to answer more than I choose. What right have you, uncle, to pass sentence on my future? I am no cucumber, of which it is said in May that it shall be salted in August. No telescope, much less microscope, shall discover whether I am growing or not. Is there any one who can tell, as he stands by a spring in the mountain, whether it is to become a rill or a rushing torrent? But the genius of the fountain knows it better than any one else, and therefore I will tell you, uncle, I do not intend to go astray into a filthy fen. As to the three hundred rix-dollars, they are scarcely an inch of paltry gold. All wretched beings have such, and the greatest wretches have most of all. What do I care about being one of them! Why, it is said that the inside of the earth is a melted mass of gold!"

"I know that language," responded Eric Ljung, with stern seriousness. "It is the language of every self-willed young man, and indeed I do not deny that there is really something great in it. I would rather see you defy me than lie. At some time we have all felt a power in our arm that could pull the earth from its foundations. But it is not arrogance that rules the world, it is reason; and above human reason stands a higher one, before which the boldest must kneel at last. There are eternal laws which no one unpunished defies, and they demand of us humility. Humble yourself, Paul, for your defiance is blind! In blind self-confidence you have challenged the wild beasts of your heart, and they will some day tear you to pieces. It is not in the slime of base passions that a human spirit grows to greatness and light. Not in the dregs of a gaming-house where the worst passions play the usurer with human fortune, not in the wild intoxication of the beaker, not in the arms of sensuality, does the power of youth grow to manhood and heroism. Seek your happiness rather in the honor of labor, in the con-

solation of prayer, and in peace of conscience; and purge your will in the humility of filial love, which you have forgotten for that unsafe faith in your own ability!"

Paul looked out of the window. Demoniac voices seemed whispering to him in the shadows of evening, and away in the woods it seemed to him he caught a glimpse of Doctor Martin's brown cloak.

"I did not play to win money," said he bitterly. "I had to do something. Everything is so narrow around me. I am smothered here by sheer good intent. It is so incomprehensibly virtuous here, that I was obliged to cool myself once with a grain of vice—to try that side too, if for nothing else."

"Well, are you content with the trial? Do you now feel lighter of heart than before?"

"I almost think so. I am fit neither to pick buds at the colleges of the university, nor to water flowers at Surutoin."

"Then undertake something which better satisfies you. Undergo candidate examination. That ought to go like a dance."

"And then afterward? Would I be the better for it? It all goes according to specifications you know, like a worn-out lesson. Why, I have not leave to think anything but what the highly learned gentlemen themselves think, and it makes me insane. I am a free-born spirit, and I will think freely."

"Boy! you have been reading Rousseau!"

"I have read 'Emile,'" replied Paul, blushing against his will.

"Indeed! Then I understand. That is just the book for such madcaps as you. Elegant but crazy. Rousseau is mad, and you are in a fair way to become so. In a hundred years such nonsense will be laughed at."

"In a hundred years Rousseau will have made the world new!" exclaimed Paul, with beaming face.

“Well, if you have read Rousseau’s ‘Emile’ with such rapture, you ought to have learned from him to love nature. There you will find medicine for bad dreams. Study nature, but study in it life, not death. Study by experiment. Observe the least things, in order by degrees to arrive at the greater and greatest. Seek laws for the whole, and at last you will perhaps in them discover God.”

“I shall discover liberty. I shall unveil the hidden. I shall set the captive free. I shall discover those mysteries which have long been guessed, but never found. I shall restore nature to humanity, and humanity to nature.”

“That can bide its time, but only go on, be firm! Thus far we are agreed. I have always thought that with you dwelt a genius formed for something great. But genius cannot, ought not to do without virtue. Great minds ought to be associated with great thoughts. Have you ever heard that great thoughts thrive in a gaming-house?”

Paul was silent.

“We will try,” continued the older friend, “to make good the consequences of your mis-step. There is something more important than three hundred rix-dollars, and that is not to betray human confidence. With what do you intend to pay your debt?”

“That, I cannot say. Not yet.”

“I have a proposal to make. Be as open as the light of day, and confide to me your plans and troubles. As a reward, I will ask the consent of your parents for you to travel abroad next summer. You will have a chance to see the ocean, southern Europe, perhaps the coasts of Africa.”

“The ocean! do promise me that!”

“I promise it, but only on the condition just named.”

“I cannot.”

“Why can you not?”

“Because I cannot.”

“What does that mean? Do you forget that I am here in your father’s place?”

“I should answer my father the same as I do now.”

“Obstinate boy? Then there must still remain a dark point between us. But I do not intend to permit it. As long as I am responsible for you, there must be no darkness between us. I will give you until to-morrow evening for reflection. Good night.”

And Paul went thoughtfully up to his little attic, which had the most charming view toward the sea. He sat down there in the open window, and looked out across the cool landscape, bright with the first budding verdure of spring. Wonderful feelings, wonderful questions, stirred in the dreaming soul of the youth. “What is life?” he asked. “What is nature? What is spirit? What am I?”

He found no answer. Mechanically he picked up a book which lay open on the window-sill. It was Arndt’s “Heavenly Paradise,” and had probably been laid there as a tender hint of friendship by the pious Cecilia.

“Ah! Such things as that!” exclaimed the youth, and he passionately shut the open book.

He did not understand the “Paradise.” He did not understand Cecilia. He did not understand himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

STARS OF THE FIRST AND SECOND MAGNITUDE.

PAUL BERTELSKÖLD, in his attic, spent a sleepless and restless night. New ideas continually mocked his fancy. Now they were gigantic thoughts of a new arrangement of the world, now long-forgotten

memories of childhood, and now a mathematical problem, which no one had hitherto been able to solve, but to which he alone had discovered the key. Now he heard the rattling of the dice and the rustling of the cards, and now it was his cousin Cecilia, praying the Lord to lift up the light of His countenance upon him, and again it was the mysterious doctor, who with ice-cold fingers grasped the reluctant hand of Paul. It seemed to him as though hostile powers were contending for his soul. The black angels and the white of the Oriental saga were struggling for supremacy.

Impatient and dissatisfied with himself, he arose. He felt weary and lacerated. He wanted light in that darkness which enveloped his soul. But whence and how? He felt misapprehended and misunderstood by all. His friend and foster-father regarded him as an enthusiastic fool. The professors looked crossly at him since he had ceased attending their lectures. To whom was he to turn for light in the fog?

It was six o'clock in the morning. The air was pure, and the heavens blue. Within the memory of man, there had not been so dry a May in Åbo. Paul took his hat and went out into the town, drifting at first without definite aim, as the down of the cotton-grass drifts before the morning breeze.

Toward the street a low window stood open, and by the desk inside sat a pale young man of twenty years with pen in hand, while in the background of the room two schoolboys bent their heads above their books. The young man looked up, saw Paul passing and said to him, "Good morning, King Midas!"

"Good morning, Phaeton," replied Paul, vexed at that allusion to his gold-making.

The young man in the window was John Henrik Kellgren, a student at Åbo, and at that time more feared than loved for his sarcastic witticisms.

Passing on, Paul met a newly-fledged young student, who was already going to a private lecture. He was a

slender youth of sixteen years, pale and of sickly appearance, but with intelligent features and handsome blue eyes. It was Jacob Tengström, afterward archbishop of Åbo.

“Are you going to Hassel’s?” inquired Tengström.

“No, to Gadolin’s,” replied Paul at random, for he was ashamed to be less industrious than his young comrade.

“Good morning!”

“Adieu!”

At that time there were two theologians in Åbo, who were also renowned scientists. One was the learned and polished Bishop Menander, and the other, the equally learned, but much rougher man, Jacob Gadolin, the second professor of theology, and afterwards the successor of Menander. A theologian in those days was fit for anything, as is a general in our own time. It occurred to Paul to visit the learned man, under the pretext of borrowing a book.

He found the celebrated professor, in night-cap and thick dressing-gown, before a fire in the roasting hot room, busied with writing a treatise—for the synod in Åbo? No, to the academy of sciences in Stockholm, on the moon’s parallax. Near him lay an opinion concerning the care of forests, destined for the approaching session of the diet, and a newly arrived letter from Councilor Ferson, containing the threads of a political intrigue.

Gadolin was a man of fifty-six years, shrewd and sarcastic, a greater naturalist than theologian, but a greater politician than naturalist.

“What do you wish, Bertelsköld?” inquired the professor, not unkindly, but with the tone of a superior who knows how to value time.

Paul replied with a request to borrow the celebrated work, “*De l’esprit*,” by Helvetius.

“What do you want of that?” inquired the professor, gathering his brows.

"I had a great desire to study the mathematical proofs of the existence of God," replied Paul, with an assumed simplicity.

"That will not do. You can study Wolf. Who directed you to Helvetius?"

"I have heard him praised as a subtle thinker."

"*Ne inducas nos in tentationem.** Do you know a book called 'Benzelii Theology'?"

"Yes."

"Well, then read it once more. If it does not relish, then read Wolf. The existence of God has long ago been mathematically proved. *De axiomatic non disputandum.*†"

"But if I doubt"

"Then read Benzelius once more, and abstain from flesh food, Spanish wine, and other heating beverages. Doubt for the greater part comes from the stomach. How is your honorable father? Is he still a sound Hat?"

"My father has long ago given up politics, to attend to agriculture."

"I understand. The countess is a born Cap. I knew your mother's father, the burgher king. He was an inflexible fellow, *tenax propositi vir. Valeas, studeas.*‡ Read Benzelius—that is my advice."

With a feeling which resembled desperation, Paul departed, and soon, almost without knowing how, was standing at Professor Carl Mesterton's door. Mesterton too was a theologian, but had reaped his laurels in the Wolfian philosophy.

Paul asked to borrow his celebrated work, "*De essentiis reum æternis*," § published in Germany.

Professor Mesterton, a lean, gaunt man, of the same age as Gadolin, was sitting in his shirt-sleeves by the open window, and seemed to enjoy the cool

* Lead us not into temptation.

† An axiom must not be disputed.

‡ A man who stood fast to his purposes.

§ On the eternal principles of matter.

morning air. His room was as cold as a cellar, and he himself was if possible still colder.

“Do you wish to undergo preliminary examination?” he asked.

“Not yet,” replied Paul. “I have been listening to you, professor, and wish to review the system.”

“Have you my *Ontology*?”

“I know that by heart.”

“Then you can read my *Psychology*, and my *Natural Theology*. Everything depends on knowing the conditions.”

“And them I know from cover to cover. But I am so unfortunate as not to arrive at any conviction. I am seeking God and life, and have hoped to find them in your *Essentiæ*, professor.”

“All realities are empty conceptions of the intelligence, and God is an abstraction of the absolute idea. Independent of thinking, nothing exists. Be content with that. When do you wish to pass preliminary examination?”

“I have not yet thought myself into clearness,” replied Paul, with a bitter feeling.

“It will do no harm to go to the bottom of the matter. Here you have my *Essentiæ*. In it you will find the terms. The terms are floor, walls and roof of the consciousness.”

“But will I arrive at the existence of God with them?”

“You will arrive at the foundation of thought. *Cogito, ergo sum.*” *

With a feeling of chill which penetrated his whole being, Paul passed on, and came at last to a little house on Kloster Street. Here dwelt Magister Henrik Gabriel Porthan, then thirty-two years old, and assistant at the library, whose treasures he knew better than anyone else, for he had recently begun to publish the history of the library in disputations. For the

* I think, therefore I am.—*Cartesius*.

moment, this rigid classical scholar was occupied with a translation from the most frivolous and charming jesters of the Greeks, Anacreon. Seriousness itself at this time loved to play with roses.

Paul found at the desk a vigorous young man, of middle height, though already somewhat bowed by arduous work, clad in a simple gray coat, and surrounded by books.

At the first glance, the young scholar seemed rather ugly than handsome, and a pair of uncommonly thick lips gave a touch of coarseness to his countenance. But the more closely he was observed, and particularly when the severe gravity brightened before a smile of captivating good-will, the more was the beholder struck by the noble, powerful, almost Roman grandeur of his whole personality.

"I come," said Paul, "to ask a book of you, sir magister, which is said to be difficult to obtain without special permission from the library. It is '*De occulta Philosophia*,'* by Cornelius Agrippa."

"What will you do with it, count? It is a misleading book, full of cabalistic superstitions, and I am forbidden to let any one take such books except magisters and teachers."

"Still, I beg if possible to get the book. I do not ask it from curiosity, but to search out the truth. In theology, philosophy, and mathematics, I have sought it in vain."

"Seek it in history. That is really the rational method."

"It is in vain. I nowhere arrive at a conviction."

"Then read the old classics! In Plato or Seneca, count, you will find a hundred times more true wisdom than in '*Occulta philosophia*.'"

"So you refuse to lend me the book, magister?"

"I dissuade you, count. Without the least critical care, Agrippa has collected a quantity of superstition

* Concerning secret wisdom.

which is unworthy our time. Without method there is no true science."

"I know that. That is why I criticise God and the Bible, science and life, but by it never arrive at anything but negations."

Porthan regarded him with a searching gaze.

"There is material for something more than common in you, count," said he, pressing the young man's hand. "But believe me, count, you are on the wrong track. God is to be found neither in the Bible nor in science, if He is not first found in our own conscience. Come to me in the library, and together we will convince ourselves of the foolishness of '*Occulta philosophia.*'"

CHAPTER IX.

THE SHINING BALL.

ALL day long, the dilapidated house by Aningais gate had been, as it were, dead. The street door had remained closed, and not even the old man-servant, who sometimes showed himself like a night-owl on the ruins of a robber-castle, had allowed his death-pale withered physiognomy to be seen on his accustomed road to the bakery to buy sixpence worth of bread.

But as soon as twilight had set in—and that was late, for it was now May,—there was motion again at the ill-reputed place. Something was carried in and out, a beam of light was once more seen through the closed window-shutters, and a suspicious smell of sulphur found its way out through the chimney. The few neighbors who at this late hour were still on the homeward road, hurried past with long strides, and an inquisitive girl, who had been bold enough to try how

narrow the crack in the window-shutters might possibly be, instantly drew back startled, with a scratch on her nose, in the full belief that she had hit it against an unknown instrument, which could hardly be anything but a goat's horn.

But within, Doctor Martin, with his brown coat and his leather apron, was zealously busied with mysterious preparations. On the coals in the furnace now stood four crucibles, whose contents he repeatedly and attentively examined. On a shelf, four small bottles of ground Bohemian glass, well closed with stoppers of the same material, were by turns the objects of his particular attention. A calendar, drawn full of astronomical signs, lay spread out on a table in the corner, and appeared to be at hand in order each quarter of an hour to be consulted concerning the position of the stars, while a large clock of unusual form, and with twenty-four hours on the face, announced the seconds with heavy uniform beats. In the middle of the floor stood a kind of tripod of copper, on the top of that a lesser tripod of the same metal, and above that a glass globe, the size of a child's head.

The ponderous clock, with eleven melancholy strokes, had just announced the hour before midnight, when the bell at the outer door made known the presence of a visitor, and in stepped Paul Bertelsköld, with firm, resolute, defiant steps.

"Here I am, doctor!" said he, as he carelessly threw aside his hat. "I come to see what your art is good for. If it is no better than Cornelius Agrippa and his occult philosophy, which I have been studying in the library to-day with Magister Porthan, you may as well choose another fool than me to deceive with jugglery, for I intend to believe nothing that I cannot grasp with my hands."

The old man nodded disdainfully. "Thus are they all," he murmured, "all, without exception, in this self-sufficient, arrogant period. They will all instantly

reach the goal, without toil and investigation, as though they only needed to stoop down to pick up the wisdom of centuries from the street. Believe what you please, young man,—I force my art upon no one. But, if you wish to be present at my experiments, the first condition is that during that time you blindly submit to my commands.”

“Will you give me what I have asked? Will you give me enough gold to pay what I owe? I do not ask it as a gift, but a loan; and you can fix the interest according to your own pleasure.”

“And if I give you that?” asked the doctor, with a singular smile.

“Then for an hour or two I will submit to your commands. Do not suppose I care of what sort they are. You may be Jew or Christian, Mahometan or Pagan, it is all the same to me. For all I care, you can like a sorcerer order me to trample on the psalm-book, or with my blood to subscribe a contract with the evil one,—it will not trouble me in the least. For the present I believe in neither the psalm-book nor catechism, neither in the devil nor his grandmother. It is a pity that I cannot fully believe in you either, doctor, for a man ought to believe in something, for the sake of appearances at least, if for nothing else.”

“I might ask you, young man,” continued the master of secret arts, without exhibiting a sign of impatience, “I might ask you why you, who do not believe anything else, believe in that which you take in your hands, though that is often less to be depended upon than that which you grasp with the soul. I might also ask myself of what use it is to lavish pearls of wisdom on one who has determined to remain in the crudeness of the soulless beast. But you are young; I pardon your lack of judgment, and will notwithstanding show you how unjustly you act in doubting the power of that art which for thousands of years has been the inheritance of a few chosen ones, and has

justly been called the divine science, *lapis philosophorum*, the philosopher's stone. Are you prepared to obey my commands?"

"Do as you please, but on the condition agreed upon. For three hundred rix-dollars, you can sell my soul."

"Then lay aside everything of iron and steel. Envelope yourself with this protecting mantle, which is impervious to fire, air, and water. Hold this magnet, which will protect you against evil influences. Collect your thoughts, and arm your courage. Above all, observe an unbroken silence, when the hour is come, for the least word of levity may destroy the fruits of all my pains."

"And if a single miserable sound from a human tongue is sufficient to destroy the effects of your art, what do you want me to think of its pretended power?" disdainfully responded the youth, as he obeyed the master's injunction, laid aside his penknife, unclasped the steel buckle of his suspenders, put on the mantle which had been saturated with a gluey substance, and took a little anchor-shaped magnet in his hand.

"The Word," responded the wise doctor, "is the sword and shield of the spirit. A sword in the hand of a fool may pierce his own heart, and everything depends on how it is used. Observe these bottles. They contain nothing but dew gathered under different constellations, whose united powers are able to bring to pass mighty things. This glass globe contains an extract of rare plants from the four zones of the earth, gathered during favorable phases of the moon, and whose mystery I cannot make known to you. Now I will draw this circle around us like a protecting wall, and place at its margin a frankincense prepared purposely to keep off those hostile powers which might hinder our undertaking."

At these words the old man drew a circle with red chalk on the ash-colored floor, taking the tripod for a

center, and at its margin placed seven little censers, while he and his disciple remained standing within the circle. The incense was lighted, and the room was soon filled with fragrant narcotic fumes.

The large clock indicated half an hour before midnight.

“The planets are favorable to us,” said the singular man, lowering his voice to a whisper. “The time is come, and now, my son, give heed! If you value your life, not another word before I give you permission to speak!”

Still with a disdainful smile, and carefully watching all the doctor’s motions, in order not credulously to become the sport of a juggler’s dexterity, Paul stood within the magic circle. His curiosity was tense, his fancy was active, but he manfully fought every mocking illusion, and resolved to be calm and self-possessed, in order, at the least attempt at deception, to unmask the deceiver.

The doctor now took the four Bohemian bottles and slowly poured their water-clear contents into the glass globe. Paul made an effort to discover the effect of this mixing, but saw only a turbid, oily liquid, which filled the glass globe about one-third full.

When that was done, the doctor lighted under the glass globe a spirit-lamp which was standing on the lower tripod. A few minutes passed in silence; the yellow liquid began to boil, and became more and more turbid, until it finally darkened and thickened to a dark brown, sulphurous-smelling mass.

Then the master took out from under the tripod a copper box, and raised the lid. Inside the copper box was a zinc box, inside the zinc box a silver box, and in the silver box a little bottle of gold. Out of this bottle he slowly and solemnly poured seven drops into the brown mass in the glass globe.

Instantly Paul saw that mass come into violent effervescence, and turn lighter and lighter colored. In a

few minutes a dark sediment had precipitated in the glass globe, and above it boiled a crystal liquid of wonderful splendor and beauty. From the glass globe this luster, which almost dazzled the eyes, diffused itself like the brightest moonlight over all objects in the incense-filled room. Everything around the two men seemed to stir and take on life. The floor sunk, the tripod trembled, the shelves lifted, the tables rose, the furnace moved, the crucibles rocked to and fro, the glowing coals seemed to dance, and shadow-like forms peered forth through the smoke as though groping toward the circle, and again, like ghosts, vanished away in empty air.

The clock struck twelve.

Paul saw the commotion and illumination of the room, he saw the forms peer forth and again vanish. He did not believe his eyes, and he pressed his hand to his forehead. His temples throbbed, his cheeks glowed; he wanted to protest against this mockery of his treacherous imagination, but his tongue refused him utterance. He felt that he was perfectly awake—he saw everything, heard everything; but he could not stir, and had lost half his power of judgment.

Impatient, exasperated, distrustful, Paul fixed his gaze on the sorcerer, in the hope of catching him at some unguarded motion indicating that he was in secret understanding with some assistant concealed in the room. But Doctor Martin stood there, equally mute and motionless, with his keen glance unswervingly directed toward a point in the periphery of the circle from which the shadows were constantly rising anew out of the smoke. At that point the censer was burning with expiring flame, and Paul fancied he perceived that the master's countenance expressed a fear which he vainly endeavored to conceal. What did that mean? Did the conjurer himself believe in his ghosts? Did he fear that they might become too powerful for him? Did both life and welfare perhaps depend on the non-

extinction of that feeble flame? Were the hostile powers of night only waiting its last flickering to hurl themselves upon the presumptuous ones who ventured to defy them by conjuring forth the secret powers of nature from the depth of the concealed?

Paul blushed, for he was conscious of a terrible and undefined fear. By nature he was extremely audacious, and had been prepared for anything; but this unknown danger, these hostile, incorporeal, incomprehensible beings who were moving behind the smoke, and who must be an illusion, but who every moment appeared to be something more, filled him with horror. Fainter and fainter became the flame, more and more anxiously were the features of the sorcerer distorted. At length the last flickering remnant of light in the censer expired, and at the same time Paul felt the floor give way beneath his feet. A crackling as of a hundred thousand firebrands, a buzzing as of a hundred thousand whisperings, were heard around him. He was surrounded by flames, he was submerged by towering billows, he felt as though he was on the point of sinking down into a pit miles deep. Everything became dark, and he sunk down powerless by the mysterious tripod.

CHAPTER X.

THE ART OF MAKING GOLD.

WHEN Paul again awoke, Doctor Martin was standing beside him, moistening his lips with the same reviving beverage which had yesterday recalled life and warmth to his benumbed veins.

“Fear nothing,” said the old man, as after a violent exertion he wiped the sweat from his furrowed brow; “the danger is now past. It was the most terri-

ble I have ever experienced. What weak beings we mortals are, even in our omnipotence! It was not in my power to calculate that a part of the incense in that little censer had been wafted away by the draught from the furnace, and an accident apparently so insignificant came near costing us our lives. A second more, and the elements, which were beside themselves with wrath at our attempt to curb them, would have precipitated themselves upon us and annihilated us. But in the very moment when they were succeeding in breaking through the periphery of the circle, the critical moment of their power was past. The process of life which they wished to destroy had had time to develop in the glass globe. When the elixir was done and the globe ceased to shine, the elements sunk back into their natural equipoise, and we were saved. Young man! you now have permission to speak. That which remains is but a trifle in comparison with what we have already passed through."

Paul felt wonderfully revived, as he had done yesterday. But with his powers doubt also returned.

"Doctor," said he, "you have not yet succeeded in convincing me. My senses were confused by a sudden incapacity, and in such a condition any delusion is possible. I must see something more. I must see it in cool blood, with clear consciousness, in order to believe in your art."

"Well, are you now as cool, as clear-headed, and as thoroughly awake, as you consider necessary to make a deliberate test?"

"I hope so. You have a noble wine, doctor! Is it Tokay? Or perhaps Lachrymæ Christi?"

Doctor Martin smiled in his own singular way. "One single drop," said he, "out of that little golden bottle I lately used is enough to transform the poorest water, yes, even the strongest poison, to a nectar with which the noblest wines of the south would seek in vain to vie. But as you now, fortunately, regard your-

self as being in your full senses, then look at this globe, which came near costing us so dearly, but which is now to provide us with a treasure which many a king and many a scholar have vainly coveted their whole lives. Tell me what do you see?"

"I see," said Paul, with increasing astonishment, "on the bottom, the most beautiful green landscape, with forests and seas, mountains and streams. It seems to me I can distinguish every tree and stone. Really, a painter would envy you that bright sea. But can it be possible? I seem to see the water rippling, and the trees bending before the wind in that artificial landscape. Really, doctor, can this be anything but an optical delusion?"

"Not at all. Some other time, I might show you living swans on that sea, and bounding deer in that forest,—yes, living people of less than a quarter of an inch in height. But that experiment requires longer preparations. What do you see above the mountain?"

"I see a dark cloud floating in a bright blue sky. Now it brightens—now it parts—doctor!—in heaven's name—no, it surpasses everything I have ever been able to imagine!"

"Tell me what you see!"

"The sun! A sun that is smaller than the flower of a ranunculus, and yet so bright that I can hardly bear its light!"

"That you may understand that I do not want to deceive you," resumed the master, "I will tell you that what you call the sun is really an illusion, though not without a high signification. You here see that mysterious tincture which, with so much difficulty and danger, I have succeeded in extracting from the inmost essence of matter. Seven drops of that star-elixir, which I have saved in the golden bottle, have been sufficient to potentiate and give life to the slumbering powers of dew and plants, and its phenomenon was the light in the glass ball. That luster and power have now con-

centrated themselves in an inestimable liquid, which secretes itself in the form of a new, though a very small, shining globe. It shines like the sun, you say. Say rather like the sun of suns; for this globe contains not only the quintessence of sunlight, but of the stars, yes, of the whole universe. Young man, you plume yourself on being a thinker. Here is the thought of the world materialized before your eyes! You say you are a naturalist. Here are the elements of all nature melted together, and gathered in one point. You seek wisdom, you ant of the dust;—and I tell you that here is the result of the wisdom of ages, which still other ages shall seek in vain to decipher. Foolish humanity, to satisfy its base passions, strives after gold, and does not know that gold is a hardened and inanimate combination of those powers which hold the universe together. Gold is the god of man, but that god is only the dead body of the soul of the world, and none but the initiated wise are able to control its real being.”

“Do you thus deny any other god than the soul of the world?”

“Do you believe in any other?”

“No.”

“Know then,” continued the doctor, indifferently, and without wasting any more words on so self-evident a matter, “that this globe contains the tincture of gold. With some caution that tincture can be extracted, and I then get a liquid of about two hundred little drops, every drop of which is sufficient to bring forth a pound of gold, according to your weight. Reckoning each ounce at forty-eight rix-dollars, we could with every drop produce seven hundred and twenty, and with the whole of that glittering globe, the value of one hundred and forty-four thousand rix-dollars. That is certainly very little to what we could bring to pass with greater preparations, but for our present object it may be sufficient. Observe now the change the liquid undergoes by its own inherent power!”

Again Paul watched the green landscape with the artificial sun, and saw it gradually darken as during a tempest. The sun was enveloped in clouds, flashes shot forth, and the rain seemed pouring down in torrents. After a while nothing more was to be seen of the landscape, everything was dark, and the recently shining sun seemed with enfeebled light to float like a large drop of oil on the turbid liquid.

“It is now time to separate the tincture,” said the master, and with extreme care he succeeded in catching up the oily globule in a white crystal bottle scarcely an inch in height, which he took out of his bosom.

When this was successfully accomplished, he examined three of the four crucibles in the furnace, and mingled their contents in the fourth, which was exposed to intense heat. “These three crucibles,” said he, “contain salt, sulphur, and quicksilver, of which all bodies are compounded. When they become potentiated by the tincture, that metal is brought forth for which humanity is so greedy, and which really contains the quintessence of both the animal and vegetable kingdom, namely gold. Observe the quantity this time is small, only one pound, or just what can be potentiated with one drop of the tincture. I will now pour a drop into the mixture.”

A soft hissing was heard, and the mass in the fourth crucible began to glow. The heat was augmented until the whole contents of the crucible seemed at a white heat, and the doctor appeared with the utmost care to count a certain number of seconds. When the number was complete, he lifted the crucible off from the fire, and placed it to cool.

Notwithstanding the many wonders to which Paul had lately been witness, he had not ceased suspiciously to watch the motions of the old man, and he now redoubled his attention, in order that a piece of gold might not possibly at the very last moment be smug-

gled into the crucible. But not the least occasion for it was perceived. The doctor remained quiet, at a distance from the crucible, which cooled at last so that its contents appeared stiffened.

“Examine for yourself!” said the master.

CHAPTER XI.

A YOUNG BANKER AND AN OLD STUDENT.

THE morning after that night which had been employed in the strange experiments in Doctor Martin's laboratory, Paul Bertelsköld sat in his attic immersed in the contemplation of that nugget of gold he had received as a gift from his master in the mystic sciences. He had weighed the shining metal on sensitive and trustworthy scales, and had carefully computed the weight which a piece of gold of that size must have, in order to be considered genuine; he had also tested its hardness in comparison with other metals; and everything convinced him that that small but heavy lump which he held in his hand was indisputably genuine, unadulterated, chemically pure gold.

This interested Paul exceedingly. What did he care about the money value of gold? It was something which he could indeed make use of to pay a debt, and shake from him the upbraidings of conscience, but beyond that it was perfectly indifferent to him. But the science, the art of making gold, and the ability, by means of it, to defy the world, what an immeasurable field for a young man's ambition!

For ages, humanity had been creeping for that miserable metal. Sages and fools had bowed before its omnipotence. How many virtues, and still more

crimes, had not gold brought with it into the world, from the laborer's toilsomely saved money to the treasures of the greedy usurer, moistened with the tears of the widow and the fatherless? And now he had this demoniac power at his command. He could now, at his pleasure, create treasures before which kingdoms and nations should humble themselves; challenge the arrogance of the realm, boundlessly alleviate the distress of the poor, abolish all inequalities in society, uplift the weak, crush tyrants, mock the calculations of all mortals, and extend a future of light and abundance around those poor regions of the north which had witnessed his birth. To him, nothing seemed impossible to one who only possessed gold, and he would encourage the sciences, support the arts, and till the deserts. Everything was to be transformed, to brighten, to be perfected and to radiate in a hitherto unknown light of culture. He would become that genius who was to re-create the world, and enraptured millions should call him their savior and their regenerator.

Again, when he reflected how many centuries had vainly delved at this great discovery, how many of the wisest of mortals had vainly toiled, their whole lives through, to make this discovery; what treasures of genius and effort had hitherto been vainly expended in the attempt to find this, the philosopher's stone, then his young heart expanded, then Paul felt that he was a man of science, that with Archimedes he could say to the astonished world, "I have found it!" It is true, he was not its discoverer, but it was he who was to make the discovery fruitful. He would chemically unravel the possibility and reality of the gold-maker's art, and, by that means, arrive at the foundation of things. He very well perceived that Doctor Martin cherished very antiquated ideas about the chemical composition of matter, for of course there were other elements than salt, sulphur and quicksilver. Why, there were lime and caloric, and various other

remarkable materials which chemistry was at that time just bringing forth. But the pupil saw into them farther than did the master; he would invent an altogether new system, and when he knew the art of transforming salt, sulphur and quicksilver to gold, that signified the same as that he could resolve all matter to its simplest form, and make himself master of the wand which revealed and illuminated the mysteries of all nature.

Occupied by these grand ideas, Paul scarcely heard that his door opened, and in stepped a person who at that time was too well known among Åbo students not to deserve a nearer acquaintance.

Imagine a colossus of six feet and six inches, with girth in proportion, bearded and ruddy, merry-hearted and good-natured, called, at his christening, Eudoxius Lejonfäll, but, for the sake of brevity, called by his comrades Leo. The very name implies a conflict between Mars and Minerva, and Leo's unkind stars would have it that that conflict should be continued his whole life through. The son of an old Carolin who had fallen at Wilmanstrand, the fatherless boy had been adopted by a compassionate uncle who was pastor at Hollola, and hated the avocation of war worse than sin. Consequently Leo was to become clergyman whether he would or not; and why should he otherwise study? But Leo had quite as poor a head as good heart and strong arms. Instead of becoming soldier, peasant, or mechanic, he was placed in school at sixteen years of age, and at the age of twenty-six years had progressed so far that by a close pinch he entered the university. At the present time he was already three and thirty years old, stout and robust, but with slim success on the learned career. Leo was fit for anything except a book-man. He did carpenter work and turning, he made skates and forged skate-shoes, ground razors and cleaned horses, chopped wood and brewed punch. Gentle as a lamb, he would,

if left to himself, harm no one, but when one of those hot battles against journeymen and sailors took place on the streets of Åbo, Leo pushed foremost into the fight, and received on his broad shoulders every blow which was intended to knock down his friends, while he himself, after his sluggish blood had once got in motion, forgot his peaceful disposition, and with his huge fists dispensed such caresses as might have felled an ox to the ground, far more a journeyman copper-smith. For all these merits, however, Eudoxius Lejonfäll was much liked by all his comrades, and indeed there was no one in the whole university who did not cheerfully wish him the best success in the knotty clerical examination,—no one except the haughty and stiff-necked professors of theology, for they were of a different opinion, and no scarcity of clergy had at that time been able to soften their stony hearts. The future clergyman had for the last ten years shaved twice a week, and still not the least glimpse of the venerable gorget was seen beneath his chin.

It was this notable *civis academicus* whose conspicuous figure with some difficulty crowded through the narrow attic door, and now interrupted Paul in his magnificent contemplations over the remarkable lump of gold. Concern stood depicted in Leo's honest countenance, and he seemed to have some difficulty in introducing his business.

"Do you need money?" inquired Paul, who was accustomed to that kind of errands, and now for the first time could ask that question with the calm self-confidence of a banker.

"No," said Leo, as he unmercifully wrinkled his torn wadmal cap. "I have got into a worse pinch than an ox at the butcher's bench. Alanus wants me to act as vindicator in a learned controversy."

Henrik Alanus was professor of natural theology, and was regarded as a pillar of the Lutheran orthodoxy.

"Answer like the Pope: '*Non possumus!*'"

“It cannot take place. He would have Arenander, but Arenander has been taken sick. The discussion is posted, and is to be aired day after to-morrow.”

“Well, respond then. Old theologue that you are—it will go as easily for you as a pipe of cannister.”

“No, you see it cannot be done. What do I know about his Hebrew codex, where the flies have made so many specks that Gadolin himself cannot read a page in it! But if I say no, he will scandalize me before the whole faculty, and I am thinking of passing preliminary examination next spring. So you see, Paul, I have thought that you might some time do me a good turn for all the times I have hammered out *perpetuum mobile* for you, and helped you mold bullets, and roast cats for wolf-bait last fall, when we went hunting at Pargas. Now if you can be respondent in place of me, Alanus will gain by the exchange, and my *carrière* is saved.”

“Indeed! And day after to-morrow, do you say? What is the subject of the dissertation?”

“Ontology. It is about the proof of the existence of God, ‘*contra atheistas.*’ The whole university is going to attend. It will be a very remarkable disputation. Janne Seléen and Nisse Hjelt* are going to take the negative. It is even said that Dean Pryss is to appear in addition.”

“But I have not read Hebrew since I was in school.”

“Oh, nonsense! The whole world knows that you can do anything brilliantly that you want to. Go in my place, and I will cut you out a sail, ahead of anything in Åbo, for your new sloop.”

“All right, I will respond for you. ‘*Contra atheistas?*’ Yes, thank you. It was a good thing, Leo, that you hit upon that idea. Now we are going to have some fun. You shall have a chance to see how I will make the heads of the church-fathers whirl.”

* Professor of theology.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FOUR ESTATES OF THE REALM, AND AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

IT was thus decided that Paul Bertelsköld, in the place of his friend Eudoxius Lejonfäll, was to respond at the solemn controversy. Arm in arm, the two waited upon Professor Alanus, and as that learned man shared the weakness of many other mortals for a sounding name, and had heard young Bertelsköld spoken of as a rising luminary at the Finnish seat of learning, they met with no difficulty, on his part, in exchanging a thick-headed candidate for the ministry for an intelligent count.

The young men pursued their walk in the fine morning, and thus presently arrived at the creek flowing into the Aura below the bridge. In the delight of his heart, Leo invited his friend to partake of some fresh Åland cheese, which constituted one of the innocent delicacies of that time, and used to be bought, by hearty students, directly from the boats.

Such a boat, quite recently arrived, was just lying near the shore, and the young men clambered across an extended plank, on board the vessel. But they had been mistaken,—it was not an Ålander, but an East Bothnian, bringing seed-grain to Åbo, of which there was a scarcity for the time being.

“Wait!” said Leo. “Let us ask those East Bothnian herring-eaters what they have that is good. Can we buy a good ‘greasing’ for threepence apiece?”

“Oh yes!” replied a brisk young peasant, who was

at work near the large hatchway, "and a stiff hand-spike or a soft cat-o-nine-tails into the bargain."

"You must have had a good breeze on the voyage, as there is wind yet in the corners of your mouth," responded Leo. "I suppose your salmon is as usual—half heads and half tails?"

"The first salmon I find without head and tail, I will keep for you, sir," replied the peasant.

"Where are you from?" asked Paul, pleased with the young man's frank reply.

"From Storkyro, if I mistake not," said the peasant.

"Do you sail here on your own boat?"

"The wind is the Lord's, the boat is uncle's, and half the cargo is mine?"

"Who is your uncle?"

"You can ask himself, sir, if you have a taste for telling sagas," replied the peasant.

Out of a meager little cabin in the stern, now lumbered a tall old man, clad in a torn sheep-skin coat, and, turning to the peasant near the large hatchway, growled in a dissatisfied snarling tone, "Who has given you leave to lay out a new plank for the gangway? An old board would have been just as good. And what have you done with the rope-end, you wasteful scoundrel? I tell you, Jonas, that I shall be a poor man, with such management. I hope you have not presumed to buy sour milk for the crew because we have arrived in port?"

"But the men have suffered with prison-fare on the trip; ought they not to have a bit of tobacco to cheer up with?" pleaded Jonas, with assumed simplicity.

"Tobacco? Are you stark mad? From where are we to get money to buy that costly tobacco? But let's see, you can give them a half-mark or so of Russian leaf per man, on the condition that you deduct nine dollars on the month's wages."

"Is not that double what the leaves cost in Åbo?" just as innocently inquired Jonas.

“That does not concern you. We must have a little profit on something. I am getting impoverished on those voracious fellows. Why, they do nothing but eat from morning till night! And now that we have arrived at Åbo, do they think they have got to the land of Canaan? It will be seen that they demand both port-duty and wharfage—the greedy Åboites! Who do you suppose is going to pay the fiddlers? And now the fellows intend to go ashore and drink, so that I shall have to hire men at the unloading. But that will not happen, I say. I intend to stay on board, and besides it will be cheaper.”

“You cannot live in the cabin here in Åbo, uncle,” Jonas again ventured to interpose. “What would people say if the richest merchant in Wasa should live so wretchedly when he comes to the metropolis of the country? It would injure your credit, uncle.”

“Do you think so? Well, then I will get leave to move to Eric’s, though that may cost me a pretty sum of pocket money. But I can take the mate with me, so he will be no expense. My nephew, the rascal, is in Åbo too, I suppose. What are those messieurs standing there staring at us for?”

“They have come to inquire if we have any stuffed gluttons for the university,” answered Jonas.

“Perhaps the gentlemen can show us the way to the house of a gardener by the name of Ljung?”

“Is this Representative Larsson of Wasa?” inquired Paul, who had been attentively listening to the familiar conversation.

“At your service,” brusquely replied the old man.

“My name is Paul Bertelsköld, and I beg to bid you welcome to Åbo, uncle!” said Paul, not altogether agreeably surprised, as he reached the hand to his unexpected kinsman.

“Indeed! Happy to make your acquaintance,” said old Larsson, in whom the reader will perhaps recognize a somewhat old acquaintance, and a poorly

imitated copy of his father, the stately burgher king. And Lars Larsson, junior, was no longer a baby, for, in the nineteen years since we last saw him, he had become an old man, and grown gray in greed for gold.

"You have grown to be a tall boy," continued the old man more affably, as he shook the youth's hand. "In those mischievous eyes there is a bit of your mother, child. Your mother was a stubborn woman in her young days, and handsome as sin; that I can say, though she is my blood sister. Well, there was no harm in that. It is said that matters are not altogether as they should be between your mother and your step-brother, but we will speak of that hereafter. I hope your father and mother are well?"

"Quite well," said Paul. "If you like, uncle, we can go with you to Surutoin."

"Not yet, child, not yet. I must keep my eye on my men, for if I should leave them to themselves they would stand here gaping all day as though they had never seen houses and streets before. But I shall come to dinner if you call for me, then I shall need no guide."

The young peasant near the large hatchway now took a couple of confident steps forward, and with his tarry fist grasped the delicate, patrician hand of Paul.

"Why, good day, Bertelsköld!" said he, with his Finnish accent. "It looks as though we might be relations. I am Jonas Bertila, the younger brother of Eric Ljung, and foster-son of Benjamin Bertila, whom they call Penna."

Paul extended his hand to the honest-hearted man with a little touch of embarrassment, perhaps, for he had not yet so perfectly outgrown the prejudices of birth that the count in him altogether disowned itself when he shook the peasant's hand. But both from his mother and at Surutoin, Paul had learned to cherish more liberal views than in those days were common in his rank, and he contented himself with the jesting

observation that if his other uncle, Provost Larsson, were now present, the four relatives would represent all four of the estates of the realm.

“That we would,” frankly replied the peasant; “and you would not have occasion to be ashamed of it, for uncle Lars *has been*, and I *am*, member of the diet.”

“You, who are scarcely thirty years old !” exclaimed Paul, with just surprise.

“Just completed my thirtieth year,” responded the peasant. “But that did not prevent my being elected three weeks ago by the district, and from here I now intend to start for the diet in Stockholm, after we have sold our corn.”

“But why was not Uncle Lars re-elected ?” asked Paul.

“There are several sides to that question,” whispered Jonas. “The fact is, uncle has every year grown richer, and every year more avaricious, but the people of Wasa did not like that, and so this year they elected Grönberg. It is thought there is going to be a hot time in Stockholm. The lords want to boss the young king, but we peasants do not intend to allow it. He is said to be a fine, well-bred young fellow, and so we choose to have him at the head of the government. Our family has always stood by the king against the lords, and with God’s help I mean to do so, too. But do you not intend to become a representative ?”

“That had not occurred to me,” replied Paul, with a smile. “For the present I have something else to think of.”

“Well, the one may be as well as the other if a man only fears God and honors the powers that be. But it would be a good thing if you could get some nice clergyman here in Abo to talk with Uncle Lars, for he is so terribly, horribly covetous that it is altogether too bad. He owns at least five kegs of gold, and cannot prevail on himself to eat anything but dry bread, be-

cause butter is dear and herring is worth money. When he wishes to have a great luxury he drinks small beer with it, and when the small beer is being brewed he measures the malt with a three-pint cup. If I had not, against his express will, smuggled a few shoulders of mutton, a quarter-barrel of herring and a barrel of home-brewed ale on board our boat, we should have starved to death during the voyage."

CHAPTER XIII.

LARS LARSSON JUNIOR.

THE old saga of the childhood of the human race tells us that all evil spirits were originally fallen angels. In the same manner we sometimes hear it said that all vices are only a superabundance of virtue. But though this would probably be difficult to prove, since many vices are only a superabundance of selfish natural instincts, it can hardly be denied that some of those stains which most deeply darken the human heart have begun by being lawful and meritorious qualities, which in their proper measure have been an ornament to their possessor.

The Larsson family had in time, by great industry, frugality and enterprise, worked itself up to a considerable opulence, and the sum of its good qualities also culminated, as the learned say, or found their highest expression in the burgher king. But as early as with him, that industry, prudence and frugality had attained a height which was near the precipice. Even in his case that energetic acquisitiveness was very near that point where it ceases to be a virtue and becomes a vice. But with him it was restrained by other powerful motives, principally by his unswerving sense of jus-

tice and his strong love of country. With the son, however, those restraining forces no longer existed. In him the good quality passed beyond its limit, and at the same time turned to its opposite. Everything was selfish. Effective industry turned to restless onward pushing, prudence became avarice, frugality became greed, and the guiding principle of the Larsson family suddenly descended from the high honor of labor to the most ignominious of all vices—the unquenchable, all-absorbing thirst for gold.

There is perhaps no vice which presses with such deep roots into the inmost hidden core of the heart. The haughty have moments of humility, the spiteful feel a need of loving, the dissolute can blush, the inebriate may repent; but never does humility, love, shame or repentance come to the heart of the intensely avaricious man. Sleeping or waking, there is for him only one single, all-predominating thought, one idol, one goal, for which he lives and struggles—gold, gold, and again more, still more, never enough of gold, gold! Lamentable fallen image of a once glorious angel-form—O man, how deeply thou canst sink in adoration of the dust!

When old patron Larsson rained down on peaceful Surutoin, about as an old withered aspen is blown down in a green pea-field, he was in uncommonly good humor. He had been hospitably and kindly received by the good kinsmen. For the first time in two weeks he had eaten his fill, and it had cost him nothing. He had been offered room and free board with Ljung, as long as he stayed in Åbo, and that would not be any expense either. He had succeeded in smuggling his mate, Jeppe Flattnabb, into quarters in the servants' room, to be at his disposal, which saved the fellow's board and the master's pocket-money. Finally, although a gardener is never more crowded with work than in May, he had succeeded in enticing from his obliging relative a promise of the privilege of using his

horses and under gardeners in the evenings for the unloading of the cargo of corn, and by that means saved still more money.

There was one thing in all this which Larsson very well understood, and that was that Eric Ljung had needed, over and above the appropriation of the crown for the plantation, individual means to set up housekeeping when he married. Others might perhaps have known how to economize in what they needed in the business of the crown, but Eric Ljung had been too conscientious for that. After he had made use of more rather than less in his beloved garden, and in addition to that had fitted up his little abode from nothing, he found himself a thousand rix-dollars in debt to his wealthy relative, merchant Larsson, of Wasa; and a thousand rix-dollars were quite a considerable sum. The note was in valid form, and the interest had been punctiliously paid, but the principal remained, and as the note was placed at three months' time, it was nevertheless, as may easily be comprehended, a clasp of iron, which held the good plantation-director dubiously captive.

The inhabitants of Surutoin therefore had many reasons for keeping their guest in good humor, and every conceivable attention was shown him. Erica, with better success than aforesaid at Hammarby, had called in requisition all the supplies of the house. Cecilia had taken the patron's belongings—not forgetting the sheepskin coat—into her particular care. The children had been washed and prepared for presentation, and finally Paul, in consideration of all this, had got an adjournment of his new examination into the art of paying debts, and everything therefore was sheer affability, cheer, and politeness, at peaceful Surutoin.

Only little Rose May could on no terms be prevailed upon to courtesy to the strange uncle. When

he made an attempt to take her in his arms, she screamed at the top of her voice.

“Come and look at my pretty chain!” said the old man, as he pleasantly jingled a heavy gold watch-chain, which constituted his only article of luxury.

Rose May was standing beside the house-dog, Caro, which was lying by the door, and for a while struggled with herself, for the gleam of gold has a mighty, instinctive, magic power, even in the case of children, and anything so splendid, Rose May had never seen. Finally she said, “Give that to Rose!”

“What would you do with the pretty chain?” inquired the old man, in his sunny mood.

“Rose would give it to Caro to eat,” replied the child.

Displeased, old man Larsson shook his head and turned away. Even he understood the unconscious but bitter irony in the child’s answer.

After the meal was ended, he was conducted to Paul’s room, to rest a half hour, till Eric’s own work-room, which was to be given up to the honored guest, was put in order for him. The wealthy man accepted all this courtesy as a due tribute. He had evidently a very insignificant opinion of Surutoin and its inhabitants. They were indebted to him a thousand rix-dollars.

“How do they thrive here?” he asked of Paul, as they were ascending the attic staircase; “slim profits, or how?”

“Well enough, when one is content,” replied Paul.

“Learned people do not understand business,” resumed the merchant, in a tone of contempt. “They like best to bask in the sunshine with a book, while we others work like slaves to save a penny. What is done with that fiddle-faddle in the garden? If it was a meadow, a good lot of fodder for cattle might be cut from it.”

“A good many vegetables from it are sold in town,” said Paul.

“Indeed! so something is sold? That is a grain of common-sense then. But it will be poverty in the end, for all that; there is nothing to pay debts with, and the husband may happen to die, and his family will be encumbered with the widow and children.”

Paul kept silence, and they entered the attic. There, as everywhere in the house, Larsson instituted a kind of mental inventory. The furniture was Paul's, and thus could on no account be judicially seized for the thousand rix-dollars.

Larsson had not taken many steps into the room, however, before his continually spying eyes fell upon the shining piece of gold, which Paul, with the thoughtlessness of his age, had left lying with paper and scraps on his desk.

“What have you there?” asked the old man, as he grasped the shining metal with the greedy claws of a bird of prey, and weighed it between his fingers.

“It is only a piece of gold,” indifferently replied Paul.

“Gold? And what are you doing with pieces of gold? Where do you get pieces of gold? How can you so carelessly leave so much money in an unlocked room?” again asked the old man, with sparkling eyes.

“That is only a small matter. Such trifling lumps we make every day,” said Paul, with a smile.

“Make? Make?” repeated the old man. “What does that mean? Why, it is pure gold!”

“That is so, certainly, but it does not prevent our making such lumps when we please.”

“Make gold! What are you fooling about, boy? Are you trying to play a joke on me?”

“I am in real earnest. Have you not heard, uncle, about the latest progress in chemistry?”

“Powder! Mere powder and whipped cream! Mere boasting of learned wretches, who scarcely pos-

sess a God and a coat! Make gold? Nonsense!" and the old man balanced the bit of metal on his outstretched, claw-like fingers.

"We made that last night, and it is only a little experiment," asserted Paul, who took pleasure in exciting the old miser's greed for gain.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE GOLD TEMPTS.

LARSSON was silent. He was ashamed to show how his soul hung upon that yellow metal.

"I wish you a pleasant rest, uncle," said Paul, who was about to go.

"Wait a moment," said the old man, as he once more weighed the lump of gold on his first and second fingers. "How much may this piece weigh?"

"About ninety ducats."

"Will you sell it to me?"

"Oh, yes! What will you give, uncle?"

"You cannot reckon it at the same value as stamped coin. I will give you three hundred rix-dollars, if it is genuine."

"You are joking, uncle; that is not half its value."

"If you go to a goldsmith, he will offer you scarcely two hundred and fifty. But I will not reckon so exactly, —I will give you three hundred and fifty."

"No, pardon me; I too am something of a business man, and I know that Swedish bank-notes are now lower than ever. Eight rix-dollars is par; but now, uncle, you get the standard gold scarcely for twelve. I will sell it for seven."

"What are you talking about, boy? The currency is all right, and the bank-notes are good as gold. I

will give you four hundred rix-dollars,—you will have it as a gift.”

“That is true, and so for your sake, uncle, I will sell the trash for six hundred,” said Paul, with a twinkle in the corner of his eyes, for it amused him beyond expression to keep on setting the old man on glowing coals.

“But are you utterly possessed? What do I care about your piece of gold—in case it is gold, which still lacks proof? Keep it—I do not need it.”

“As you please, uncle, it is also quite indifferent to me.”

“Let us say no more about it. But tell me, my dear Paul, since you are so well provided with gold here in the house, how is it that Eric cannot pay me what he owes?”

“That is due to the fact that we had not until recently discovered the art. How much is he indebted?”

“A thousand rix-dollars. Or rather one thousand two hundred, for he received his money in notes at par, and now he will have to pay me according to the currency, since the notes have fallen. I need my money, and am thinking of recalling my loan to-day or to-morrow.”

Paul pondered. He had never known that Ljung was in debt. Like lightning it flashed through his mind that he might now make good a part of those anxieties he had caused his good foster-father, whom in all their disagreement he had never ceased to love. For that, nothing was needed but to make more gold, and he did not doubt that Doctor Martin would teach him the art completely, or at least make him several pieces of gold.

“I have a proposal,” said he. “You pay me six rix-dollars per ducat, that is five hundred and forty, and gain in the transaction at least thirty per cent., but

bind yourself, uncle, to buy two hundred and seventy ducats, that is, two more lumps like this."

"Where will you get them?"

"I will make them."

"You?"

"Yes. Why not? You know I told you, uncle, that I made that last night between eleven and one o'clock."

"Don't try to make me believe any nursery tales!"

"Does it surprise you, uncle? I could disclose more remarkable things, but you believe only in realities. Well then, uncle, you have there a reality, which weighs ninety ducats, and if to-morrow I bring one or two just as heavy, you need not believe in my words, uncle, but only in my gold."

For a while the old man, in a visible struggle with himself, was again utterly silent.

"If that is really the case," said he finally, "we are certainly living in the last days of the world. What good would it now do to work and strive for poor pence? Any lazy dog can stretch forth his hand, and pick gold pieces out of the fire-place. Any apothecary is at liberty to make fools of us. But it is impossible. I want proof, and if you can prove it I will consent to any terms whatever."

"So it is decided that you buy two hundred and seventy ducats, uncle?"

"Yes. But a piece of gold is no proof. You may have bought it from a goldsmith, or you may have melted down an old chain, for example. I must be present myself at the making of the metal. Otherwise I shall not believe you. Where do you make the experiment?"

"It is not done here where I live," evasively answered Paul

"Where is it done?"

"I cannot tell that."

"If you cannot answer so simple a question, your

gold manufacture does not amount to much, boy, and you are presuming to make a jest of me! You can no more make gold than can my silly Jeppe."

"But if I can?"

"You cannot. I have heard such stupid stories before, and devil a bit do they trouble me. Keep your piece of gold!"

Paul reflected, and he was more and more pleased with the thought of being able in a moment to pay his foster-father's debts without offering his treasures to any goldsmith, which, in a town so prone to gossip as Åbo, had its doubtful sides. He finally said:

"Will you give me a sacred promise, uncle, not to make known to any one what I know in this matter?"

"I give my word of honor upon it, if you are content with such a security," replied the merchant.

"I do not want any one to doubt *my* word," proudly responded Paul, "and therefore I do not doubt the word of another. Then I will tell you, uncle, that the gold is made at the house of a learned German or Jew by the name of Doctor Martin. It is a secret of the greatest importance."

"I understand. Well, where does that doctor live?"

"Near Aningais gate," and Paul briefly described the old house.

"Very well I will accompany you thither when your time permits."

"For the present," replied Paul, "I am occupied with a discussion, but in the early part of next week I will go with you, uncle, on the condition that I now, immediately, get five hundred rix-dollars for this piece of gold."

"Indeed! You make some stipulations. But no matter. I will buy that bit in case it is genuine."

And the avaricious man took from his breast pocket his well-filled leather wallet, where the possessions of so many debtors had found an asylum, and which was

badly worn by long continued use. With extreme care he counted out from it note after note, every little while wetting his thumb, to assure himself that two bills did not cling together. It was evidently hard work to give up so much money, but a glance at the shining metal, which in his eyes had a far greater value, restored his courage. When he had in this manner counted out half the sum, he suddenly paused, regarded Paul with suspicious eyes, and abruptly said :

“But if you should deceive me?”

“I can never deceive,” replied the young man, with that high-born bearing which was an ancestral inheritance.

The old man once more began to count, but again interrupted himself by asking:

“What are you going to do with this money?”

“Pay a debt.”

“Well, I will here give you four hundred rix-dollars, and take a receipt for that amount, with name and seal in legal form. One hundred rix-dollars I will retain, until I have a goldsmith test this precious piece of metal.”

Paul bit his lip. “As you like, uncle,” he replied.

They now separated, but no strengthening slumber came to the old merchant's eyes. He arose and went to his cargo at the harbor, reprimanded Jonas, scolded the men, acted penuriously in everything as was his custom; but in the midst of all this he again became perfectly silent, and seemed so immersed in unwonted thoughts that he scarcely observed what was passing around him. The cargo was unloaded, evening was approaching, and still near the main-mast of his vessel stood old Larsson, sunk in deep meditation.

“Something is not right with the old man to-day,” said Jonas to himself.

CHAPTER XV.

AN ACADEMIC DISPUTATION.

AS in the spring the aspen and willow far and wide cast the down of their seeds, which the wind whirls away to unknown regions without any one's being able to determine where if ever they shall find a lodgment and take root, so also do the tall aspens, and the low willows of humanity throw their seed at random out into the ages. So long as youth exists in the human race, there will always be spring winds enough to scatter the seed, and spring sunshine enough to make them germinate. Certain years are favorable to the seeds of vegetables, and certain periods for those of ideas. They seem sometimes to come in swarms, before which the beholder is startled, and asks himself if they are to overspread the land. But their laws are the laws of life. Hundreds and thousands perish in sterile ground, ten come to transient blossoming, and only one of the thousand takes root, blossoms and matures for the centuries.

Throughout the world of culture, at the time of this story, there passed a strange presentiment of great changes to come in the human race. Few could as yet divine their meaning, none could clearly comprehend what the dim future bore in its bosom, but all instinctively felt that something extraordinary sooner or later must come. The old looked suspiciously at every sign of a change in the weather of the times, and the young gave voice to daring hopes. Beneath the delusive surface of the deepest peace, everywhere existed a secret dissatisfaction, an undefined longing after something different and better. And as in almost every generation

the day of judgment is predicted as near at hand, so also, in the year 1771, many believed that the time of the great overthrow had almost arrived. Afterwards, when it had for some years been expected, many again believed that it was all chimera,—just as the Scriptures say that it shall come to pass in the last days.

The inhabitants of Åbo and Finland, from top to toe, were living in the period of utility. Theology was sleeping on its withered laurels, classical study had as yet not fully awakened from the old pedantry, history was picking in the Pentateuch, jurisprudence was a dead lesson to be committed, and medicine an unborn embryo. As has before been mentioned, it was to philosophy, chemistry and botany that the field belonged.

Then the theologians, although the most of them were themselves deserters to the natural sciences, began to scent danger in the atmosphere of the times. Various suspicious symptoms were traced in the young; perilous philosophical heresies, blasphemous fragments of the French encyclopedism, began to steal in among the hitherto orthodox students of Åbo. A sudden quaking seized that orthodoxy which had so long been sunk in sweet slumber, and, against their will, the fathers of the Finnish church were obliged to open their spiritual armory and hunt up the rusted weapons for the defence of the church.

Henrik Alanus, the zealous young theologian, was chosen to lead the sword of Gideon against the Philistines, and caused a thundering dissertation, *contra atheistas*, against the deniers of God, to be announced. The subject was to be discussed in the larger auditorium of the university (there were only two), and believers and skeptics looked forward with intense interest to that combat against invisible opponents, for people were thoroughly persuaded in advance that no atheist would venture to pick up the gauntlet. But all the more should those who secretly professed the godless doctrines of the time be dumb-stricken, crushed,

annihilated ; the doubting should be restored to the lap of the orthodox church, and by such a triumph the orthodox should gain new courage to strike down all adversaries, open or concealed.

The memorable day arrived. An unaccustomed eye would not have observed any change in the physiognomy of the old Finnish university town. No stores were closed ; calicoes, linens and tobacco, cap-ribbon and clay pipes, had their usual sale ; the galleys at the shore did not run up their colors ; the sailors appeared just as tarry as yesterday ; the peasants at the market did not appear the least solemn at their loads of butter ; the thick milk was just as deep in the tubs of the Pargas good-wives ; the jackdaws, it is true, flew in black holiday costume, but that was their lawful custom. Only the learned looked important, as they gravely walked to the university at half-past seven in the morning, and the students regarded each other with half-mysterious glances, as though each would ask the other, "Is it you that this is about? Confess, miscreant ! Are you an atheist?"

At precisely eight o'clock, Professor Alanus was sitting in the upper *cathedra* of *auditorium majus*, and Paul Bertelsköld in the lower,—the former in cassock and newly powdered peruke, and the latter in the uniform of his rank. Between them sat the two regularly appointed opponents, *prior* and *posterior*, Professors Seléen and Hjelt, also in cassocks and stiff perukes. In a separate seat of honor sat Bishop Menander, vice-chancellor of the university, a handsome, venerable man of sixty years, but with youthful animation in the gentle blue eyes ; and at his side the rector of the university, Professor Hassel, the old Latinist, stately as a Roman, though already bowed by age, who numbered just as many years as the century in which he lived. On a third seat was seen the dean of the cathedral, Doctor Samuel Pryss, sixty-five years of age, deaf and almost blind, about whom the bad rumor circulated

that he intended to make an extra opposition speech. Behind him, on benches, sat Gadolin and Mesterton, the professors of theology, and, farther on, the single official pillar of jurisprudence, Professor Olaf Pryss, brother of the dean, and the only Atlas of the medical art, the renowned Johan Hartman, author of the medical work, with his shrewd eagle eyes, and his handsome, intelligent face. Beyond them were seen two intrepid economists, Professors Kalm and Gadd, the less known professors, Ross and Nääf, and behind them the younger scholarly luminaries of the university, Porthan, Calonius, and Lindquist, together with stars of the second and third orders, Professors Juslander, Velonius, Deutsch, Veman, and Arelin. Even Captain De la Mothe, teacher of French, Gabriel Nordberg, drawing-master, and Carl Lenning, musical director and also organist at the cathedral, had put in an appearance, to listen to the defeat of the atheists; and in the dense throng of students who were standing crowded in the more remote part of the room, three intelligent blonde faces were distinguished, the satirically smiling Johan Henrik Kellgren, the shy, slender Jacob Tengström, and the finely formed, handsome youth of the same age, Abraham Nicholas Clewberg.

The disputation ceremony began as usual with a Latin prayer, which was followed by superlative harangues to the bishop and vice-chancellor, the dean, rector, and professors, and the whole audience, who thereupon arose. Next followed a *lectio præcursoria*, or preparatory presentation of the subject, in which the speaker was not sparing of vigorous side-blows at distinguished antagonists, and afterward a speech to the first opponent, concerning his great learning and zeal, together with a request for kind criticism of the defects of the work. That gentleman then arose and answered the compliments with an equally touching entreaty for leniency, first to the originator of the discussion and afterward to the respondent; and after all these pre-

liminaries, which lasted about an hour, the discussion itself finally began.

The dissertation treated of the so-called ontological proof of God's existence (*argumentum ontologicum*), through which humanity, from the imperfection of its own reason, concludes that something higher and more perfect must exist. That was the cardinal point in which theology coincided with philosophy, while at the same time it sought to appropriate to itself its results, and contest its spirit of contradiction. The subject was thus excellently chosen, and resembled a fortified encampment, set upon a hill, from which the whole position of the enemy, in the valley beneath, could be bombarded, and its own army also be strengthened with prisoners or deserters.

CHAPTER XVI.

PUBLIC SCANDAL.

“**I** ENTERTAIN the most sincere deference (*sincerissimam venerationem*) for the learning and profundity of the author,” began Magister Seléen, in sounding Latin. “I am also willing to acknowledge the merits of his work *in amplissima forma*. There are only a few little defects, like intercepting clouds before the bright sun (*nubila Phæbi*), which I think ought to be lightly touched upon (*leviter tangere*), in order to give the author further opportunity to unfold his brilliant store of knowledge (*præclaram eruditionem*). First, concerning the exterior, several typographical errors are to be laid to the charge of the otherwise very scrupulous (*scrupulosissima*) French printing-house” (which are enumerated).

It was now the respondent's turn. He arose and

made the customary speech, in which he sought dutifully to solicit forbearance for his youth and inexperience, and did not neglect to insert phrases as sounding as possible about the enormous superiority of the opponent. Paul recited that lesson very punctiliously and seriously, but his words chanced to have such a strangely ambiguous sound, that it was hardly known whether it was he or the opponent who here stood in need of forbearance. It was done though, and it now became his duty to review briefly the objections of the opponent, during which the originator found time to think over the defence.

“The highly learned and estimable opponent,” said the respondent, “declares that the author’s *opus* is certainly extraordinary, but yet upon nearer view seems to him like a huge typographical error.”

“*Nequaquam*, by no means!” interposed the opponent, greatly astonished at such a misunderstanding; and a suspicious merriment was immediately discovered in the audience.

“The opponent declares that the author’s work is by no means extraordinary,” recapitulated Paul.

The face of the Magister Seléen flushed red as a peony, but he fortunately appealed to the words of the author, and with much profundity explained the true sense and spiritual meaning of those passages where the errata occurred.

“Furthermore,” said the opponent, “I should consider that the author had not very thoroughly exhibited the historic source of the ontological proof. The author ascribes it to Bishop Anselm of Canterbury, while others regard Origines as its first originator. To the fathers of the church here appear obscure passages”

“The opponent claims that the fathers of the church are obscure,” recapitulated Paul.

“I do not say that the fathers of the church are obscure,” resumed Magister Seléen, intensely irritated,

“and I beg the respondent to adhere to *verba formalia*. No obscure places exist here, which require illumination”

“The opponent maintains that no obscure places exist here, which require illumination,” very seriously cited the respondent.

The audience burst into laughter.

The auktor, who was visibly annoyed, sought with praiseworthy courage to lead his listeners back to his subject, while he amply proved how to the scholastics of the middle ages had been reserved the honor of first making the existence of the Supreme Being demonstrably plain. But his opponent had become excited, and had interrupted him with a thundering “*Nego, I dispute that!*”

“The opponent disputes the existence of the Supreme Being,” recapitulated Paul, with his imperturbable tranquillity.

“*Nego, iterumque nego!*” exclaimed Magister Seléen.

“The opponent further, and in the most decided manner, disputes the existence of any Supreme Being,” continued the inexorable respondent.

A loud murmur of diverse opinions ran through the closely packed ranks of the audience. The elderly were angry, the students delighted, and all were astonished at the incredible temerity of the young respondent, in the presence of the vice-chancellor, the rector, the dean, and all the professors.

“*Dominus respondens* misunderstands the highly learned opponent,” said the author, Magister Alanus, anxious to put an end to the vexatious scene. Unfortunately, while thus speaking, he smiled, in his embarrassment, in a manner which the quick-tempered opponent regarded as a new insult, and after a few vain attempts to mollify his wrath, Magister Seléen broke off his speech of opposition with the declaration that he intended to waste no further arguments on deaf ears.

It was now the turn of the second opponent, Magister Hjelt, professor of exegesis. He had delivered lectures on the most difficult passages in the Old Testament, and in any war of words was a veteran. He criticised the Bible-texts appealed to by the author with such success that it was not long before the cunning of the respondent found some exposed point in his stout battle equipments. Meantime the interpretation of the Bible-language quoted by the author became the topic of discussion.

“The most learned opponent claims that the Old Testament is doubtful,” interposed the respondent.

“The question is about passages difficult of comprehension in the prophecy of Isaiah,” corrected the opponent.

“The highly learned opponent regards the prophecy of Isaiah doubtful,” said Paul.

“I declare the interpretation difficult of comprehension,” corrected Hjelt.

“The highly learned opponent declares that he does not comprehend the prophet Isaiah.”

Once more a murmur arose, which was very unusual on the silent seats of *auditorium majus*. Alanus again interposed, and after the customary harangue, the opponent retired from the field, with his military honor intact.

And now, according to the rules of the university, the author challenged any one whomsoever in the audience, who was so inclined, further to appear with remarks against his work.

There was a universal silence, for the audience was prepared for remarkable things.

Then Professor Mesterton, cold and calm as Logic herself, whose sworn champion he was, arose, and after a few dry words to the author, began to criticise the logical proof in his work.

“The widely renowned and most venerable opponent says that in the author’s treatise there is neither

logic nor reason," said the respondent, with the same deliberation.

Secretly the author wished that Belus of Babylon might swallow up his respondent, but pretended not to notice the thrust, and met the objection with much dignity. Mesterton, the disciple of Wolf, was, by his mathematical assurance, a dangerous antagonist. His words fell sharp as icicles; but while he was seeking the principal support of theology in the consciousness, he did not himself observe how he was undermining that building which he wished to sustain.

"The renowned and reverend opponent describes theology as a metaphysical edifice of learning where no reality exists except the idea, and no idea except the tenets. Consequently the most reverend opponent defines all theology as tenets," recapitulated Paul, with a keen indisputable syllogism, before which the audience shuddered. It was even thought that the bishop himself perceptibly changed color; but the cold philosopher in his priestly vestments, without vouchsafing the respondent the least attention, continued to demonstrate the sovereign sway of thought, and thus gave the death-blow to the cause he wished to defend.

Alanus was on nettles; the theologians flushed and paled. Then arose Gadolin the mighty, before whose keen genius every opposition had hitherto been scattered like chaff before the wind. He took up the fallen church, as it were, in his giant arms. In a thundering speech he grasped with assured glance the very core of the present question, and lashed atheism with a murderous irony. He clearly showed how atheism is practically and theoretically impossible; how deniers of God deceive themselves; how in the place of the eternal God they make themselves wretched little idols, which they adore; how a falling leaf terrifies them, and two straws crossed strike them with dread; how they think themselves omnipotent, and every need becomes their master, every passion their tyrant; how a breeze

sweeps them away, how posterity derides them, how the child in the cradle laughs at their imagined wisdom. Powerfully, gloriously, wittily he spoke, and but one thing was lacking to make this speech a perfect masterpiece—and that was the warm breath of Christian love within it.

The audience was delighted. The brief, fleeting impression of the young student's mockery was suddenly blown away. Paul himself was near blushing, but he was too proud for that. He was to recapitulate the speech, and he did so all the more boldly because he wanted to silence something within him which almost resembled a bad conscience.

“The most renowned and esteemed opponent,” said he, “first declares atheism impossible, and afterward fights it with fire and sword. The most renowned and estimable opponent wishes to lead humanity back to the innocence of a sucking babe, and declares every other nourishment than the mother's milk of the church to be an absolute deadly poison.”

At these presumptuous words, uttered by a student of eighteen, to one of the most esteemed men of the country and the university, who was a clergyman and a teacher besides, an indescribable tumult arose in the room. The theologians were the first who rose excitedly from their seats, and their example was quickly followed by all the teachers, while the students divided into two ranks, one for and the other against the defiant speaker. In a manner extremely unusual in these halls, the discussion was broken off, and the audience gathered in dense, noisy groups.

Then Bishop Menander, dignified and venerable, arose.

“Young man,” said he to Paul, “at four o'clock to-day you will present yourself to me for private explanation. And you, sir magister,” added he to Alanus, “will close the services with a prayer for the king.”

CHAPTER XVII.

THE AURORA SOCIETY.

THAT afternoon there was an unusual stir in Åbo. Everywhere among the learned and among students nothing was spoken of but the discussion,—little about the author, but the more about the respondent. Opinions were greatly divided. Almost all the teachers sharply censured the young student, and many were of the opinion that for his untimely mockery he ought to be forever banished from the university. The students separated into two ranks. Half of the entire number belonged to the theological department. There Paul Bertelsköld had violent enemies, and the sturdy bullies whose office would some day be to preach the gospel of peace, appeared much inclined to reprimand the young blasphemer in a way he should feel. But the students of the three other departments took sides with Paul, and declared that any one who ventured to attack him would have to deal with them. On all the street-corners, in all the students' quarters, groups were seen, who with the greatest ardor discussed that important question. There was the semblance of open war in that learned town, and rector and vice-chancellor had an unquiet day.

The Aurora society, the first cradle and morning flush of the new Finish literature, was assembled at the house of Magister Porthan. Its immediate object was to collect for publication "magazines published by a society in Åbo"—the ancestral tree of a numerous offspring, but so small that its whole foliage, that is, the entire contents of one number, might now find room in a column and a half of our larger newspapers. No.

9 was set up and proof-sheets produced. Among them were to be read a "Demonstration of magnanimous friendship," a "Suggestion about erecting stone walls in the country," an article by Libarian Lefrén on the annotation of the manners and costumes of people, with news of deaths and appointments, and that memorial address on the mortal decease of his late majesty, which had shortly before been delivered by lecturer Alopæus.

"This is a rather meager mess you offer our readers, Brother Porthan!" suggested the witty Calonius, with a sarcastic smile across the round, shrewd lips. "What do you say to our spicing our number with a bit of the merry science?"

"Another funeral discourse over the late king, I suppose?" inquired Porthan, while a gleam of sunshine played across his serious features. "Up to date, I have received six of that sort, besides the two we have already published in Nos. 7 and 8. And you call that cultivating 'the merry science!'"

"You have guessed rightly," said Calonius; "it is really an elegy, but of a curious kind. I have a paper here, so fresh that the event has hardly had time to happen, and the ink has not yet got dry. Judge for yourself; it runs as follows:

"The youthful Cleon, who adorning
 A beardless chin, the band doth wear
 Saw in a dream one sunny morning
 A slow procession onward bear
 A coffin, graven thus: '*Hic jacet*,
 No more shall Envy's arrows smite her,
 Safe in kind Nature's ample pocket,
 No more shall Atheist's bullets bite her,
 Nor possible to her a fall is,
 Theologia, Naturalis.'"

"That is the sharp pen of young Kelgren!" exclaimed some. "We ought, the sooner the better, to call him into the society."

“Patience! let us hear the continuation,” said Calonius, with a smile.

“Death with the gout the old woman smote,
 And Eloquence a poem wrote,
 While History, astonished, dug the grave,
 And Metaphysics mourning staves did wave,
 And Jurisprudence held the ensigns high.
 Pleased that his treatment had turned out so well,
 Medicine bore the crosiers and the bell,
 While Exegesis’ raiment matched her sigh.
 Economy bore twigs of juniper,
 And Botany walked weeping after her;
 Then Chemistry, Astronomy, and Physics,
 And, sad in muslin badges, Mathematics.
 But, in red ribbons, and with heart elate,
 The spirit of the eighteenth century sate
 Aloft, and cracked the whip, so that the span
 Flew off where none caught up with it again.
 And stood the Sciences, dumb-stricken,
 With grief for her nought e’er could quicken.
 But youthful Cleon, once again awaking,
 His hand passed o’er his chin, and quickly found,
 For all Theology’s unwilling forsaking,
 His band, though loosely hung his throat around.”

“No, that must be by Clewberg,” said Porthan, laughing. “I know that patron. Boyish as sin, and yet a real favorite of the muses!”

“Author unknown,” merrily responded Calonius. “At least I would not advise him, with this *opus*, to make a trial for the chapter. But what do you say to inserting the piece under the rubric, ‘Translation from the French?’”

“No,” said Porthan, who maintained rigid discipline with the young. “*Ne gutta quidem*, not a drop of that must escape the taciturn lips of Aurora.”

“I understand,” said Lindquist, with a laugh. “Not a drop of that ‘absolute deadly poison,’ whose effects can be counteracted only by the mother’s milk of the church, used as a purgative.”

“We,” continued Porthan, “can bear a good dose of attic salt, but on our youth I believe that it would

to-day have a worse effect than tobacco. Such a scandal has not lately taken place in our pulpits. That beardless boy-count has turned the fathers of the university upside down."

"If the fathers are in such a precarious fix as that, I shall quit swearing by 'the bones of our fathers,'" said Gustavus Veman, professor of Finnish literature. "But the old gentlemen walk in boots of smear-leather, and do not tumble down for every little count."

"That is my opinion too," was the reply. "The boy alone would not have been dangerous, but the peril lay in the fact that he was Mesterton's evil conscience. Mesterton, like a raging Hercules, led the club against his own camp, and Bertelsköld directed the blow. In spite of all the eloquence of Gadolin, theology suffered a murderous defeat."

"Just so. And that is why Anonymous has buried it," responded Calonius.

"My good sirs," seriously resumed Porthan, "we may play with fire, and for awhile amuse ourselves with the flitting sparks, but I greatly fear that we shall yet live to see the day when this sporting flame will be a desolating conflagration. It is neither an audacious student nor a back-slidden professor which gives me anxiety, but that superficial French spirit of the times, which is streaming in through all the windows, and will some day destroy all profound studies. The century may doubt and criticize—I have nothing against that—indeed, I look upon criticism as that purifying fire which is to regenerate the sciences. I also mean to bring a little straw to the stack, for I have lately robbed the Finnish nation of its reputed origin with the ten tribes of Israel. But it is neither by empty metaphysical dogmas, to such an extent that we can kill dogs with them, nor by still emptier French negations, that we are to arrive at the truth. Rousseau claims that education depraves man. That is the point

which it is desired to reach, and the annulling of theology is only the first step."

"As to that," said Calonius, "I fear no Rousseau, while we, here in Åbo, have a Cerberus by the name of Porthan, for the Latin grammar. Next to economy, that is decidedly the best antidote to French extravagances."

"What would you do with the boy-count, if you were appointed by the rector on the committee of discipline?" inquired Lindquist of Calonius.

"Inasmuch as nothing can be proved against him," replied that renowned jurist, "I should reprimand him and let him go. I should say to him, 'Go home and drink sour milk!' According to Hartman's medical book, that medicine would be exceedingly good for hot blood."

"And you, Porthan?" asked Veman.

"I should suspend him for a year," calmly replied that rigid investigator.

"It will be seen that the rector is of the same opinion," said Lindquist. "Porthan is the ear and arm of Hassel. But it is a pity for young Bertelsköld,—he is a mathematician from top to toe."

"I might add," responded Porthan, "that he is a Roman from heart to tongue, and Gadd or Kalm would tell us that he is a born naturalist. But even if he were a son of Apollo himself, and bore beneath his brow all the mysteries of science, he must bow before that which is more than he, and that is our university. The danger of our time lies in the one's placing himself above the many. Brother Lindquist, as a mathematician, ought to admit that the whole is greater than any one of its parts, and Calonius cannot wish to part with an iota of the law. *Fiat justitia . . .*"

. . . pereat mundus,"* merrily added the interpreter of the law. "Any one hearing Porthan to-day would look upon him as a Draco, or, at the very least,

* Let justice be done though the world perish.

a Cato ; but last autumn, when his sister caught the small-pox, and was near losing her pretty complexion, I saw him cry like an enamored shepherd."

"You are pettifogging!" replied Porthan, laughing. "My sister was near losing her eyes."

"Oh well!" responded Calonius, "there you hear him confess. And he who to-day wants to suspend a genius of whom he is himself enamored, because the boy happens to be a little loose-mouthed, will to-morrow be ready to give his only coat to a drunken fellow for whom he will the next day have to pay half his salary as bail. But *apropos* of profundity, I have another poem here, which you can insert with good conscience, for it does not contain a bit of theology. Listen :

" " If all the foundation of wit were but *sure*,
And *good hearts* had ever the shield of *good sense*,
If *shyness* were proof of a *modesty* pure,
And *courtesy* never gave *virtue* offense,
With no peril to me,
I might credulous be.' "

"There we have Calonius on the tight rope!" triumphantly exclaimed Porthan, and the Aurora Society chimed in with a hearty laugh.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BISHOP MENANDER.

WITH all the pride of a young war-horse that had for the first time been under fire, Paul Bertelsköld departed from the meeting for discussion. He had taken revenge on those proud theologians who had mastered and scoffed at him. He had hurled an

independent word straight at the brow of that rotten institution which wanted to shackle his convictions. He had been the first who had ventured to defy those antiquated teachers before whom all others bowed the knee, and he had made the university tremble. With high-borne forehead, glowing cheeks and flashing eyes, he made his way through the dense crowd of students, where he had suddenly gained more enemies and more friends than any other of his years, and directed his course to his friend Clewberg, for he had his reasons for not liking to go home to Surutoin.

On the road he felt a heavy hand on his shoulder, and heard the coarse voice of Leo,—the same Eudoxius Lejonfäll in whose place he had just now officiated at the speaker's desk.

That good-natured man was in a strange and greatly excited mood. He wept and he laughed, he swore and blessed himself. Why, he was a candidate for the ministry, and if the theological fathers should find out that it was he who in his innocence had brought about that spectacle, his examination, his whole future, was at stake. On behalf of his department, and of himself, he had the greatest reason to be exasperated with Paul; and yet he was charmed with the boldness of his friend. He could not help it; since it was for his sake that Paul had got into that extravagance, he was obliged take sides with his friend.

“They were shouting there at the university that they meant to give you a thrashing,” said Leo, “but any one that touches you with a finger will get paid with a fist. I think it may be as well for me to go with you a piece, for Hellman, and, Aulin and the other journeyman preachers, who are coming over there, have nothing good in their mind toward you.”

Paul thanked him, and expressed the opinion that he should take care of himself well enough without help, but Leo was obstinate. They arrived at Clewberg's, and Leo waited as sentinel outside the door.

The afterward widely celebrated Abraham Nicholas Clewberg, ennobled Edelcrantz, was at that time a seventeen-year old student, and from childhood had been the pet of Fortune. He was sole heir to a not insignificant fortune, a handsome residence and a rich library, was himself equipped with nature's choicest gifts, and had been reared with the greatest care. A free thinker, finely cultured, lovable, intelligent in his whole personality, he was a born statesman, man of the world, and courtier; and still the muses had chosen him for their especial favorite. Young as he was, there was in Åbo and Finland at that time but one man, Kellgren (and he as yet scarcely more than the crude material), who already so clearly as Clewberg foreshadowed and reflected the coming Gustavian period.

Clewberg was at once a naturalist, philosopher, and literary historian. Paul found him in a light airy summer house, with a view toward the garden, occupied in arranging a splendid collection of butterflies, while near him on the table lay an open volume of the French Encyclopedia, and Raynal's History of the Indian Colonies.

"You come just in the nick of time to cool yourself with a bit of encyclopedia after the young Hercules' fight with the giants, in case you cannot better endure helping me arrange my butterflies!" gaily exclaimed Clewberg. "See here what Diderot writes about theologians, under the head of Christianity."

And the two young men sat down to make their observations upon one of those mocking articles, abnegative of all Christianity, with which the French encyclopedia overflowed. After awhile a simple dinner, but for two Åbo students an unusually well prepared one, was brought in to them. The witty friends knew so well how to turn the whole contest of the forenoon to a jest, that at last, when it was nearly four o'clock, Paul, with a somewhat light heart, set out to the bishop's, firmly resolved neither to allow that mighty prelate

to impose on his convictions, nor submit to making any kind of apology to the offended theologians.

Leo accompanied him to the residence of the bishop. "It is just as well for you to have somebody near you whom you can depend upon, when you stick your head into the lion's jaws," said that faithful friend.

Notwithstanding all his resolutions, Paul felt his heart beat with more rapid strokes, when he stood in the presence of the mighty vice-chancellor of the university, who, with Professor Hassel, the rector, was already awaiting him.

"Young man," said the bishop, with friendly dignity, "you have to-day deeply transgressed against that deference due from you to your teachers, and our holy religion. As I hope you have done it more from indiscretion and the thoughtlessness of youth than from deliberate design, I have summoned you hither to hear what you have to say in your defence."

"I am most humbly grateful for your reverence's good opinion of me," replied Paul, with a slight irony, and a voice that in the beginning trembled a little. "In order not to show myself underserving of it, I will voluntarily confess that I acted according to my convictions. I believed in the freedom of thought. I believed that at a public discussion a man would have a right to use all weapons against views which he regarded as false."

"Not *all* weapons," said the bishop sternly. "Only savages use poisoned arrows, and the law of the realm of Sweden punishes blasphemy against the Word of God with death. For your free thought you are responsible only to God, but your free words are an action which must subject itself to the law. It is not usual for a man of your age to have *convictions*; but if you have, that fact gives you no right to revile those of other people, least of all those of your teachers. You have misrepresented and ridiculed the statements of

the opponents, you have mocked at the Holy Word, and only by a sincere repentance and a thorough apology can you still avert your deserved punishment."

Paul was silent. He had expected this.

"I will be indulgent to your youth," said the bishop more kindly. "Tell me here, in the presence of the rector, that you repent your rashness, and then I will to-morrow allow you at Consistorium to offer your apology to those who took part in the discussion."

"If I should feign a repentance which I do not feel," said Paul, "I should fail of that deference I owe your reverence. If I should submit to beg pardon for that which I regard as the right of every free man, I should wrong myself."

A cloud passed over the noble brow of the bishop, but it again departed, and with sympathizing seriousness he continued:

"So young, and already so deeply contaminated by the errors of the times! I recognize the forerunner of that defiant spirit of the age in whose sight there is no longer anything holy on earth. But I conjure you, young man, not as your superior, but as your fatherly friend who wishes your good, do not believe that selfish spirit of defiance and denial which is going through the world! Be humble,—that is your true honor. Submit to your duty,—that is true freedom, and does not debase your courage. Give up your blind temerity. Have respect for your teachers and for sacred things, which through all the tempests of time shall remain firm as the mountain. I have been told that you are a promising young man. Do not forfeit your temporal and eternal weal by an insolent defiance. Think of your country, which you can serve, and of your parents, who expect of you the delight of their age. Acknowledge your precipitancy and apologize for it, and I will let everything be forgotten."

There was so much kindness, so much dignity, in

the words of the bishop that against his will Paul felt touched. This tender admonition, so unlike the reception he had before met from the theological fathers, he had not expected. With all his faults, he was an inexperienced, good-hearted youth, and with kindness his willful disposition might be wound around the finger. He hesitated in his resolve.

Unfortunately, honest old Hassel, the rector, thought he ought to put in a plea for the young man's repentance, and in a dry, decisive tone, said: "Thank his reverence, Bertelsköld, and beg him to pardon your wrong-doing. Afterwards you will, at ten o'clock tomorrow, present yourself at the Consistorium."

That was throwing a tub of water on the upflaming better feelings of Paul. In a moment he was again the defiant youth who felt himself combatting for freedom of thought, against tyranny and intolerance.

"I am grateful for the kindness of your reverence," he said, "but I have already stated that I cannot avail myself of it."

"Reflect well, young man—your future is at stake!" said the bishop, with displeasure.

"I have reflected, and hope to take care of my future myself," declared Paul, with a steady voice.

"Then," replied the bishop, "I suspend you for one year from the university of Abo, and afterwards you are at liberty to return, *provided you apologize.*"

CHAPTER XIX.

SORROW IN THE SORROW-FREE.

IN the afternoon of the same day, Eric Ljung returned from town to Surutoin. His brow was clouded, his eyes downcast, and his walk slow. The

children, who with noise and gladness ran to meet him, he hardly saw.

At the steps he met the faithful sympathizer in all his joys and sorrows. "What has happened?" she asked, as her tender searching eyes sought to penetrate the cloud on the forehead of her husband.

"I fear," replied Eric, "that my dream was only too much a prophecy. You remember that the maternal ancestor of the Bertelskölds promised me ten happy years?—They are past, and now sorrows come to our happy Surutoin."

"Are you a naturalist, and do you believe in superstitious dreams?" chidingly replied his faithful wife. "Be a man, Eric, and tell what disturbs you!"

"Your great-uncle also, Erica, believes in inspirations just as he believes in a *Nemesis divina*; and how can any one help it, if he believes in a Providence? I have an individual trouble;—to-day, Uncle Lars presented his note against me."

"What a sin and shame! So it was for *that* that we received the unjust old miser as a guest in our house, and in every way showed him kindness! You have given up to him your own beloved work-room, where you work with half the difficulty, and where you feel as much at home as a snail in his shell. You have cheerfully and without recompense loaned him horses and laborers. You have wasted your precious time with his many concerns, and drained our slim purse to improve his starving body, while I, for his sake, have neglected a hundred more agreeable matters. That is the thanks we get. But we are not going to lose our courage on account of it. The good God has always helped us in the past, and He will help us also in the future. I will write to uncle at Hammarby. He will lend us as much as he can, and then we will sell my bridal clothes, for I no longer need them, and the gold chain I inherited from my mother, and then, Eric, we

will work and economize. It will turn out all right, you will see ! ”

Eric kissed his courageous wife, while the tears stood in his eyes. “That is just like you, Erica ! ” said he. “Have I not always said you are a rarer plant than any that is known to botany ? ”

“What nonsense ! ” said she, with a laugh, as she threw her arms around his neck to conceal a tear which would steal out from beneath her own handsome eye-lashes. “That is nothing so long as God grants us health.”

“I think so too,” said the husband, “and I ought not to despair so long as I have you, for you are a born minister of finance. But then it is not the debt which troubles me most.”

“Indeed ? Then it is Paul ! ” responded Erica, with her quick ability to comprehend everything clearly.

“He is suspended ! ” replied Eric.

“What do you say ! For gambling ? ”

“I almost wish it were for some stupidity, though he has already caused me many sleepless nights. But to-day he responded for Alanus, made fun of the Bible, and was insolent to the professors. The bishop wanted to set everything right with an apology; but do you think Paul accepted the proposal ? ”

“No. I could have told them that in advance.”

“It just now happened. He refused, and the consequence was that he was suspended from the university for a year, with the stipulation that if he wished to come back he was still to apologize. It is said that Hassel consulted with Porthan, and in such matters Porthan is stern as a Roman.”

“That is an unpleasant story. To be saucy to the professors, of course that is stupid and boyish, I admit it; but not so very wicked. But it is different with the Bible. How shocking it is, Eric ! Has the poor boy really gone so far ? ”

“God knows that at least he has not learned it in

our house. But who can calculate where all the snowflakes fall in the winter air? For the last year, Paul has been reading a multitude of French authors, which are not good; and then he has been intimate with Clewberg, you know."

"That agreeable student?"

"Yes, our Paul too is a lovely boy, but . . . In short, it is in the atmosphere of the times, and the very best are the first to be infected by the miasmata. If Paul had been of normal head, of mediocre sense and ambition, he would probably have been an honest, middling sort of man, like his father, and many another fine fellow. But from his mother he has inherited that extraordinarily keen head, and that tempestuous, self-willed heart. He will be either a genius or a wretch of the first order, but never a common man; and we who know him ought to have borne it in mind."

"You, good gentlemen, are always wise afterwards," replied Erica, smiling in all her grief, "but the question now is not about what we ought to have done, but what we now ought to do. My faith is that Heaven has sent the storm to purify the atmosphere, and adversity to temper the man. Unwholesome vapors from the air of the times have gathered in Paul's head; the cloud has become charged, and a thunder-storm was inevitable, but it is doing him good. Everything now depends upon our not leaving him carelessly to himself in this crisis. So you say he must go?"

"Within three days he must leave the town."

"That is well. He was in any event going to travel, you know. Of course he will first go to his parents. But you will go with him?"

"I?" exclaimed, Eric with surprise. "Why, it was you who was so decidedly against my former plan for travel!"

"Your former plan for travel had nothing to do with this one," replied Erica, with decision. "You are

not going to Africa, my dear. You are going with Paul to his parents at Falkby. You will there give an account of your stewardship over their treasure confided to us, and consult with them about what arrangements, after this, ought to be made with Paul. On the journey there or back, you will visit Hammarby and consult with Uncle Linnæus about our own affairs."

"And you remain alone, Erica?"

"Meantime I will take care of the children and Surutoin, plant cabbages, and save money. I am a born financier, my husband claims."

"You are a born queen!" exclaimed Eric, enraptured. "Catherine the Second cannot govern Russia better than you govern our kingdom, Surutoin. Now I reflect upon it, your plan is now as ever the only practicable one. It is decided. Paul and I will set out day after to-morrow. Fortunately our guest will probably be ready to go at the same time."

"Our guest shall have a chance to hear 'more truth than poetry' before he departs," said Erica indignantly. "It seems to me as though the greedy old wolf must have some project in mind. He often sits here some time without hearing or seeing what is taking place around him. I fear he will become crazy from sheer avarice. It is not as it should be."

"He probably has some new speculation in his head."

"No, it is something else, though I cannot make out what. Has Paul paid his gambling debt?"

"I made inquiries yesterday, and found he had paid it all up correctly. But how, I do not know."

"You must know it. He must not leave debts in Åbo."

"That is my opinion too. I have a suspicion which I hardly dare acknowledge."

"I wonder if he has fallen into the hands of that German wonder-worker?"

"It is curious that you immediately hit upon the

right thread. To-day I heard for the first time that he had been seen to go into that ill-reputed house."

"But who is that Doctor Martin? And what is he doing here?"

"In his passport, he is spoken of as one of those dozens of quacks who in Göttingen or Jena buy their medical diplomas, and the only thing that is known about him is, that he busies himself with chemical studies. But why he lives in Åbo, no one knows. There is not much dependence to be placed on the gossip of the people, but I should not like to see that Paul had made the acquaintance of so doubtful a person, and had perhaps borrowed money from him."

"Let me try to disentangle that. There I see Paul coming by the garden gate. Does he look like one who had suffered defeat? No. Proud as a general after a victorious battle, he opens the gate and approaches."

CHAPTER XX.

THE DEALER IN SOULS.

AT between ten and eleven o'clock in the evening of that day when Paul Bertelsköld passed so decisive a turning-point in his young life, a tall but bowed figure stole, with wary steps, through the street door of the dilapidated house which was inhabited by Doctor Martin Weis. He rung the ordinary stroke, was admitted, and found the wise doctor occupied with his chemical preparations, in the same laboratory where Paul had a few days before been witness to such mysterious events. The light of the furnace revealed the features of old Larsson, which disclosed an intense excitement, while not the movement of a muscle in the

doctor's cold, furrowed countenance announced that he either avoided or desired this visit.

"I come," said Larsson, "in order, after our agreement yesterday, to find out the more exact conditions of our contract, and also to convince myself that your art, doctor, will stand the test."

"I cannot recall that we made any agreement," coldly replied the doctor. "You wished to learn the art of making gold, and I answered you that that art is not any trade or manufacture, but a trifling part of that insight into the mysteries of nature which is granted to but very few mortals. I furthermore told you that such an insight cannot be learned in the same manner that one learns to melt iron or boil potash, but it is the fruit of a whole long life's profound investigations and toilsome exertions. My terms, you say: Disrobe yourself of fifty years of your life, as you would throw off a worn-out coat; become twenty years old again, and I will see what I can do for you."

"I know I am too old," said Larsson, nonplussed, "and I do not ask that you shall initiate me into your art, but if it were possible to prepare me a kind of drops, tincture, or whatever you call it, which even in the hand of the uninitiated would have the precious power of transforming all metals to gold, I would ask you the price, in case I might have a fancy to buy it of you?"

"The price? And buy, do you say? With what then would you buy your gold tincture? Perhaps with the same gold you manufacture with it? Or perhaps with ragged slips of paper called notes, and which are said to represent the value of gold? What is the price of knowledge? - Can you buy sunshine? Can you buy health or long life? My art and my tinctures are to be bought as little as they."

"I understand that this can be no common transaction," responded Larsson, with visible discomposure, "but that is just why I wish to ask if I could not in

some other manner do you a corresponding favor. Might you not, for example, desire titles and positions of honor? I am rich, I do not need your gold, but it would be a pleasure to me—from a natural desire to discover the secrets of nature. I would therefore serve you with my influence and recommendations. I have been a member of the diet, and belong to the ruling Cap party. You should not regret having done me a favor.”

The doctor disdainfully shrugged his shoulders. “Titles? Positions of honor? Think you that any title or position of honor can counterpoise the sage’s consciousness of his power over divine and human things?”

“Pardon me, I did not wish to offend you. But when I see you occupying this humble house, it seems to me that you should be able to have it much more commodious—for your studies.”

“And what hinders my buying the whole of your poor Åbo—yes, the whole of your desolate and icy land? If I only will, neither power nor money are wanting. But it is not my wish. I am content with an opportunity to live and work in tranquillity. I have therefore chosen this humble abode, just as the noble pearl conceals itself in the uncomely oyster.”

“But your health, doctor, would be better from a fine and wholesome country place, which I should be able to procure you.”

“My health? How old do you think me to be?”

“Forty, or at most fifty years, if I mistake not.”

“Add another forty and then fifty more, and you will arrive somewhat nearer the truth. When the great Gustaf Adolf went to Germany, I was a child, and still remember him very well. When the people kissed his elk-skin waistcoat in Naumberg, my mother carried me in her arms. As a youth I fought on the bridge of Prague, when Königsmark stormed the town. I have fought under Piccolomini, under Turenne and Condé.

Then I went back to my studies, and worked under Leibnitz in Germany, and Newton in England. In short, I am at present one hundred and forty-four years old, and do not see why I should not live to be twice as old, or rather, stretch out my life to as many centuries as I myself please. From that you can judge how much a country place in your wildernesses would contribute to my health."

Larsson regarded him distrustfully, and yet was mute with amazement. A scarcely perceptible smile, like a glimmer of icicles, played across the doctor's lips, and he added:

"Such a thing astonishes you? I admit that it is indeed not altogether usual. But to one who has taken a look behind the scenes, that signifies nothing at all wonderful. Have you never heard of the elixir of life?"

"I have heard of various impositions that quacks have practiced with such stuff," tartly replied Larsson; for when that cord was pulled which constituted the only fetter of his soul, he was by no means easy to outwit. "For the rest," he added, "I am a Christian, and will not have anything to do with witchcraft."

The doctor's features were distorted to a kind of friendly smile.

"Haily weather!" said he, "who is not a Christian? Only there are many facts in nature which are not written in the Scriptures. And since you are a Christian, I will answer your questions, that the life-tincture, which is the highest of all secrets, and an emanation of the very substance by which the world lives, that inestimable tincture I can upon no terms give away. But as to the gold-tincture, which is a chemical extract, potentiated by the influence of the stars, you can without especial difficulty get that as a gift. I make more of that than I can myself use."

"As a gift!" exclaimed the merchant.

"You know I have already said that it cannot be

paid for. All your wealth would not be able to replace me enough of that tincture to fill a tea-cup. I can give it to you, but only with a little proviso."

"What would it be?"

"You pledge me your soul?"

Larsson thought he had heard amiss. "Your pardon," said he, "I have grown somewhat hard of hearing in these later years."

"You pledge me your soul," calmly repeated the doctor.

"What do you venture to demand?" angrily exclaimed the merchant. "Am I a fool, or are you the devil himself?"

"Neither—but the former is more probable than the latter," replied the mysterious man, without changing a feature. "I force my gifts upon no one. If you can do without me, be assured I can still more easily do without you."

"Sir, if you deal in souls, you are either a scoundrel or a madman. I will have nothing to do with you."

"Then go away! What have I to do with you?"

Larsson hesitated. "In what way should I pledge my soul to you?" he asked, with evident irresolution.

"Simply in the ordinary manner,—with a little slight pin-scratch on the arm, and afterward with a contract addressed to Doctor Martin Weis, and subscribed with your blood. It is a formality which we chemists require, in order to place that person to whom we deliver the tincture under the influence of the stars. You now know what you wished to know, and are at liberty to go away. I have something to do besides wasting my time with the soul of a shop-keeper."

"How much of the tincture would you give me in case I accepted your terms?"

"For a beginning, this bottle," replied the doctor, taking out the same little crystal bottle which he had shown Paul. "This contains one hundred and ninety-

nine drops, and with that you can transmute five thousand nine hundred and seventy lods of gold. That will not make more than one hundred and forty-three thousand two hundred and eighty rix-dollars; but you cannot do everything instantly."

"And you ask nothing else?"

"Nothing."

For awhile the merchant was silent, as he computed what he might risk. On the one side was a formality which could not be grave perjury, and on the other the at that time enormous sum indeed of one hundred and forty-three thousand two hundred and eighty rix-dollars to begin with.

"I will subscribe to the contract," he replied.

CHAPTER XXI.

UNLIKE SONGS OF PRAISE.

PAUL BERTELSKÖLD had separated from the noisy friends who had been awaiting him outside the house of the bishop, intending to carry him in triumph through the town. He returned to Surutoin with the proud mien of a conqueror, but within him there was a sense of defeat. After the first intoxication of excitement followed a feeling of unrest, which he vainly sought to drive away. He was dissatisfied with everything,—with Åbo, with Surutoin, with the quiet family in which he lived,—dissatisfied with life, and in conflict with himself. There was an emptiness within him, and the glory of the spring seemed to him a lifeless waste.

He walked through the garden. The first leaves had just unfolded on birches, maples, and gooseberry bushes. The first carefully-watered narcissi to-night

exhaled their sad fragrance. Swallows were flying, bullfinches were singing and gnats dancing. Once he had taken delight in them, but now they awoke in him a feeling of loneliness. There was a strange sultriness in the air, and he hastened his steps.

On the little knoll by the hot-houses, stood a young oak, which he himself had planted two springs ago. How he had loved that tree! With what fond attention had he, one year ago, watched its first leaf-buds, which assured him that his darling lived, that in the cold winter it had not frozen to death! The oak as yet was destitute of leaves, and it was time to ask it, "Dost thou still live?" But this year Paul had forgotten to send it one glance. He had something else to think of, and walked absently past.

He came to the steps. The sitting-room door stood open,—perhaps purposely,—and he could not unobserved pass by to his room. Though it had never been his custom to steal away, he now felt tempted to do so, but, as that was impossible, he stepped defiantly in.

At Surutoin, every morning and evening, prayer was offered. It was now the hour for evening prayer. The whole family, and all the help of the place were present. Cecilia Larsson, as usual, was reading a chapter from the Bible. It was the twenty-eighth chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah.

"Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine! Behold the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand. The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet. And the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer;

which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.”

“ * * * Wherefore, hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men ! * * * Ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us : for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation : he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet : and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand ; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you : for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night : and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report. * * * Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong : for I have heard from the Lord God of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth.”

While Cecilia was reading, a noise was heard approaching from the direction of the town. It grew louder and louder, it spread into the garden, and seemed to surround the house. The reading ceased. Paul's restless glance flew to the window, where he recognized the clamoring crowd. An avalanche of more than a hundred students, whose number had been continually augmented on the road from the bishop's residence, spread in dense ranks over silent Surutoin.

All these were adherents of the opposition of the times. Few of them had formed a clear opinion of the cause they defended, and still fewer entertained concerning it any clear conviction. The greater number consisted

of jovial young men, who with the greatest pleasure took part in a little disturbance, and blindly followed their leaders anywhere.

The design was to institute a kind of ovation or homage for the hero of the day, not to speak of a serenade. But the university singing, like much else, was at that time still a child in its swaddling clothes, and was practiced mostly in church music or bacchanalian songs. *Pacii predecessor*, Director Lenning, who, by the sweat of his brow, worked this uncultivated field, celebrated his greatest triumphs when the students, on Advent Sunday, sung in the cathedral, or meantime served the vice-chancellor, his reverence the bishop, with some Latin hymn.

For awhile the crowd had paused in irresolution as to the most suitable choice of a piece for the occasion. One was heard to propose the old school-song, *Cæperit faustis avibus*; another wanted *Puer natus in Bethlehem*. The rest called for *Gaudeamus*, and their opinion prevailed. Then that whole multitudinous choir, those who had voices and those who had not, chimed with more fervor than success into that century-old student-ballad :

“ Gaudeamus igitur, juvenes dum sumus (bis).
Post jucundam juventutem,
Post molestam senectutem
Nos habebit humus.”

But now came a little change :

“ Vivat academia, vigeant studentes ! (bis).
Pereant theologii !
Floreant hæretici,
Nec non respondentes ! ” *

“ Hurrah ! Hurrah ! Long live Paul Bertelsköld ! ”

* The original text, which gives a “ God save ” to the professors and audience, together with a *pereat* to the devil, had here been changed to a “ God save ” to the students and heretics, but a *pereat* to the theologians.

swept the shout, like a tempest, through the peaceful garden.

The day had been unusually warm for so early in the spring, and toward evening the sky had been overcast with clouds. Just as the students closed, a black wall of cloud was rising in the west, across the sea, and a couple of gleaming, blinding flashes, followed by a majestic peal of thunder in the distance, lit up the arch of heaven.

A part of the students remained silent beholders of that magnificent spectacle, while others in their zeal still continued to huzza for Paul Bertelsköld.

"Cecilia," said Eric, "open the psalter that we too may sing a song of praise."

Cecilia read:

"The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory."

"Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honor and majesty: who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind: who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire: who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed forever. Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. * * * * *

(30) Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: thou renewest the face of the earth. (31) The glory

of the Lord shall endure forever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works. (32) He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills and they smoke. (33) I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give the glory, for thy mercy and truth's sake!"

Cecilia closed, and with a few more beautiful flashes the brief storm withdrew toward the sea. Little by little, the noise outside had died away, the clamorous, youthful crowd had returned to town, and the peace of evening had resumed its sway.

One after another the children came to kiss their parents' hands, and say good-night. Without uttering a word, Paul pressed the hands of his friends, and went to his room. In that happy home, where the fear of the Lord stood round about like a wall, and everything, from the low stalk of the narcissus to the lofty brow of man, blossomed in benediction, he felt like a stranger.

CHAPTER XXII.

PAUL'S DREAM.

PAUL sat down by the open window, and looked out into the May night. His erring thoughts sought a harbor and found none. His restless, throbbing heart sought peace, but sought it vainly in heaven and on earth.

His body was tired, and his soul still more weary. The night, the solitude and the silence made him drowsy. His ideas became confused, and as he sat with his hand beneath his chin, and his head leaned against the window casement, he fell into a slumber.

Did his soul sleep? No; softly she loosened her

fetters, floated away, and in dreams revealed to him a rare vision.

He seemed to be walking in the garden where he had walked on the preceding day. He was searching for something, he knew not what, but he was seeking it as though his life were at stake. He came to the knoll where he had planted his young oak. The oak had burst into full leaf, but all the leaves were yellow. This astonished Paul. "Is it already autumn?" thought he to himself.

He looked around him, and birches, lindens and maples were as yellow as the oak. Withered was the lawn, and all the flowers frost-bitten. Not a bird was singing, not a bee buzzing, not a gnat dancing; all was dead and desolate around him.

He looked farther, and the river was dried up, and the sea resembled an enormous valley, from whose dry bed naked mountains peered forth. He lifted up his eyes: the atmosphere had vanished, his waving hand felt no resistance, and no respiration heaved his breast. The once blue sky was black,—not like a thundercloud, whose menacing margin is gilded by the sun,—but like a pall above a grave.

In terror, Paul looked toward the town. Where old Åbo had stood, was a ravaged wilderness, and amid heaps of rubbish lay a general ruin of the once beautiful and venerable cathedral.

He asked himself what this meant. Was he removed a thousand years backward or a thousand years forward in time? Had the globe been snatched from its orbit, and hurled so immeasurably far into infinite space, that sunshine and life could nevermore reach its desolate surface? Who had "transformed the face of the earth"?

He alone was alive. All else was dead. He said to himself: "I think, therefore I am." What more? This was not enough. Like a rootless thistle-down he was floating on a shoreless sea. He needed a foot-

hold—he needed something to love and something to live for.

“Who hath killed thee?” said Paul to the young oak, for his heart was sorrowful.

“Thou!” said the oak.

“I?” And he put the same trembling question to the blossoms at his feet, to the ruins of the town, to the desolated wilderness, to the earth, the heavens and the sea.

“Thou!” they replied.

Paul was at the same time angry and trembling. He stooped down, picked up a stone, which had never possessed organic life, and asked the stone, “Who hath killed thee?”

“Thou!” said the stone.

“Thou! Thou! Thou!” echoed throughout all nature, but not in sounds heard by the ear—they were agonizing cries of unspeakable anguish, which flew from the entity of matter to the soul of Paul. And as though all nature had suddenly gained the power of expression, it re-echoed from everywhere around him: “Thou hast taken away our God! Give us back our God! Our God!”

“Have ye not matter? And matter is eternal!” exclaimed the youth.

The deep sighed. The very pebble blushed for its eternity.

“Then ye have the human spirit; is not that enough for you?” said Paul.

At these words an appalling laugh of scorn echoed through all nature. The yellow oak lifted itself up from its roots, and worshiped the atheist; the withered blossoms kissed his feet, the mountains bowed down, the wilderness quaked, the earth yawned beneath him, and with terrible anguish he sunk down into an indescribable abyss.

Paul experienced a feeling like death, and more than death—annihilation. With benumbed and impo-

tent wings his thought vainly strove to rise once more to consciousness of itself. Profound, black darkness enveloped his whole being. And still there yet dwelt with him something which could not be killed, could not be annihilated. But it was the same life that slumbers in the seed.

Then out of that impenetrable darkness, two shining points, like stars in the night-heavens, began to appear. They brightened, they seemed to come nearer and nearer, and at last Paul recognized his mother's beautiful eyes, which looked at him with the tenderest love. He lay upon her bosom, and with tears of blessedness she kissed his beautiful curly head. Again he was a little child, fresh in soul as the wild rose in the dew of morning. He was gay, happy, and innocent. Everything was again well; all sorrow was forgotten. What more could he ask?

Then his mother led him out on the knoll, where the young grass was brightening, and showed him the sunny sky, the blue sea, the blossoming earth. All the birds were singing as of old; everything breathed fragrance, and glowed with youth and beauty. "See!" said his mother, "all these are God's witnesses! All these praise their Creator! Paul, my son, will you promise me never to deny, never to forsake your God?"

"Yes," said the child.

"Then bend your innocent knees on this green hillock, and praise God for his infinite grace," said the mother. And the two knelt down,—and when Paul awoke from his singular dream, he felt his cheeks wet with tears.

CHAPTER XXIII.

TWO MISSING ONES.

EARLY in the morning, Paul was awakened by his friend and foster-father, who told him to get ready for traveling, as there was an opportunity to go to Stockholm. The East Bothnian galley, commanded by Jonas Pehrson, was to sail that evening.

“Traveling?” asked Paul. He had not thought of that.

“You are suspended, you know, my dear boy!” replied Eric, “and the journey cannot be put off. There will be no peace at the university so long as you remain here.”

Paul was silent. The events of yesterday, obscured by the dreams of the night, now stood clear before his memory. Yes, he must go away; far away, that he very well understood. But to part from these good people, who so sincerely loved him, and whom he had caused so many anxieties, filled him with an unexpected sorrow. Pressing the hand of Eric, he hastened out.

He went to seek the gold-maker, as he had intended to pay Eric's debt. How could he ever forget that obligation of gratitude?

He arrived at the dilapidated house. The street door stood open, which had never happened before, and not a living being seemed to be there. Paul entered. All the doors stood open, the same as the street door. He went to the laboratory. Everything was desolate and forsaken; the master, his old servant-man, his bottles, crucibles and circles, all had vanished. Nothing but the empty, fireless furnace, with a few bits of glass and lumps of slag, remained.

Paul made inquiries in the neighborhood. No one knew anything about the disappearance of the doctor. Only one old woman (and she was deaf) had in the night heard a strange racket in the suspected place. When Paul wanted to find out more, the neighbors only shook their heads and told him that it would be well if *that person in there* had at last gone *whither he was to go*. The young gentleman could be content with that, and should not meddle with matters which he would be wise not to dissemble about.

As there was nothing to be done, Paul visited a few friends, to bid them good-bye.

“Go!” said Clewberg, “and when the last hour of theology has struck, return! With Epaminondas, you can say, ‘I leave behind me the battle of Leuctra!’”

Other comrades tried to console him by saying the professors would repent,—“and Porthan with them!” they added. The gay young men had as yet scarcely awakened after the adventure of yesterday. They told him that they did not intend to let him go without a cheer at the harbor.

“I am with you on that!” declared Leo. “It is perhaps the end of my clerical band, but it is all the same to me—I shall be there! And should those whom you know have anything evil in mind toward you, rely on my fists! Trust to these paws, boy of my heart!” And tears choked the faithful-hearted colossus.

When Paul returned to Surutoin, he heard, to his surprise, that old Larsson had just taken away his things, to return to East Bothnia. Something was not right with the old man. He had been away all night, and when he returned, he had in a kind of frenzy talked about some one’s trying to steal from him some enormous treasure.

“I have something to say to you,” said Erica to Paul, as she arranged the contents of a couple of portmanteaus, put in socks and shirts, folded handkerchiefs, looked over the list of clothes, gave orders to

the girls to weed the carrot-beds, and quieted the children with some good-sized slices of bread and butter. "Come, Paul, sit down beside me, and help me buckle the portmanteaus, and we will talk like old friends."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE LESSON AND FAREWELL.

ERICA LJUNG, *née* Lindelia, was, according to the assertion of her husband, a born finance minister, but she was also one of those who might be called the heart's chief of police. Her eyes, at once clear and warm, had the wonderful gift of penetrating fog, and feeling, far more than searching out the appearance of a human heart. She had not talked half an hour with Paul, while together they packed and buckled the portmanteaus, before she saw straight through him, and among other matters, discovered his connection with the mysterious gold-maker. That gave her occasion for a lesson in her style.

"And if you could without difficulty make you a mountain of gold," said she, "what better would you be for that? In the gain of the gambler there is no blessing. Once, all the treasures of Peru were pouring into Spain, but they ran out again more rapidly than they had come, and the land became poorer, and the people more depraved than ever. Not gold, but work, prayer, and honest trade, make people rich. If I water my plants with warm water, I can in a short time force carnations and stocks to blossom, but afterwards they will quickly wither away. You wished to pay Eric's debt, but your good intention chose a bad means. You would cut down the mountain-ash to get at the flowers. But Eric would never have agreed to that. Making

gold is probably not utterly impossible, for some day chemistry will arrive at the point where it will take all metals apart, and consequently put them together again also. But that discovery, which will utterly change the situation of humanity, Providence has spared to coming centuries, when our race is ripe for such a change. Your doctor, like hundreds before him, is either a deceiver or one who deceives himself. If he could make gold, he would not bury himself in a corner of the world."

"But I have seen him do it," objected Paul.

"You have seen him take a lump of gold out of the crucible, but you did not see what he had put into it. On that point, criticism and doubt would have been in place. Without proof, you believe in a gold-maker; but concerning God, whose existence is attested by the whole creation, you doubt. Is that worthy of a reflecting human being?"

"All conviction must begin with doubt."

"Not at all. Life, like mathematics, begins with axioms: Or when have you doubted your own existence? God is an axiom. He can never be proven; he is felt."

"But theologians wish to prove. . . ."

"Theologians do like the blind man, who, instead of supporting himself on his staff, attempts to measure how long and thick it may chance to be. That is what I call trying to bail out the ocean with a scoop. . . . But now the knapsacks are ready for marching. When we see each other again, Paul, you will believe."

"I wish I could."

"Come here, Rose May!" said the mother. "Tell Paul who lives in heaven, and every evening looks at you from the bright stars."

"God lives there," said the girl, nodding, with a clear, sure look, at the embarrassed youth.

"How do you know that, Rose May?"

"Rose is sure," replied the child.

“But, as you never have seen God, how do you know it?”

“Rose knows, for all that,” replied the little one, with much decision.

“You hear that, learned gentlemen!” said the mother, with a nod. “It is written that the mouths of babes and sucklings shall put to shame the wise of the earth. Go on, Paul, you restless, seeking soul, go on to clearness! God, the All-wise, shall sometime cause his light to arise in the darkness, even for you!”

When everything was ready for departure, and Paul was to say farewell to Surutoin, it was almost evening. Never had that charming vale amidst the mountains seemed to him so peaceful and lovely. As the verdure of the evergreen forest seems to us doubly beautiful against the desolate snow of winter, so now was the budding garden reflected with wondrous allurements in the farewell gaze of Paul. All those buds in hedges and flower-borders were like so many fair promises of a charming future, and they were nevermore to give delight to him. How mild was this air; how pure that sky! Yes, here—he felt—here, in peace, love and piety; yes, even beneath that glistening dome of the cathedral, away in the splendor of evening,—here still dwelt his denied God! And now his straying craft was to leave this calm harbor, alone to wrestle with the billows of life.

“Farewell! Farewell! until we sometime understand each other!” sighed he, with a long and tearful good-bye gaze at that beloved landscape.

“May God speed the time!” said a voice at his side, and with her cheek leaned against the trunk of the oak, Cecilia Larsson was standing with moist eyes beside him.

“You, Cecilia, you, my good angel!” exclaimed the youth, in his overflowing emotion. “Do you really believe that we shall some day understand each other?”

“Yes, I believe it,” said the young girl artlessly,

“and, if you would not think ill of it, I would beg you not to refuse a little parting gift in memory of me.”

“You good soul!” said Paul, deeply affected. “How should I ever think ill of your friendship!”

“The fact is,” continued Cecilia, with embarrassment, “I have two Bibles. One, I inherited from my mother, and the other was a gift from my father, and—you must not find time tedious!—I have put one of them into your satchel, and marked a few places which you can read on the journey.”

“Repeat to me, as a parting word, one of those Bible-sayings, and I shall remember them better!” pleaded Paul.

“I remember two passages in the book of Tobias,” replied Cecilia, after a moment’s silence. “They run thus :

“ ‘ Since thou wert dear to God, it must thus be : thou must not remain without temptation, that thou mightest be proved.’

“ ‘ But of a truth I know : he who serveth God is comforted after trial, and is delivered from affliction, and after chastisement he findeth grace.’ ”

“Thank you, dear, good child! May it happen to me as you say!” whispered Paul, as he pressed a kiss on her pure, angelic forehead, and hurried away.

The whole family now accompanied the travelers to the banks of the Aura. A great crowd of people had assembled on the shore, enticed thither by curiosity, for half the corps of students—the half who sided with Paul—had gathered in order once more to see him and pay him homage before his departure. With difficulty, and not without many hearty hand-pressures, Paul made his way through the dense crowd. To his surprise, he observed among the students also Magister Porthan.

“I have not accompanied the others,” said the strict man, smiling kindly, “to take part in their homage, which I disapprove, for your punishment is just, and I

myself advised your suspension, but I have come to beg you not to distrust your future. At eighteen, we all may make a misstep, and it is *our right* to be punished by the law we have insulted. But ten years later, we see the world with different eyes. Observe, Bertelsköld, I too am a severe critic, and yet I firmly believe in an all-powerful God. But it is better, with a magnanimous, seeking disposition, to fight for a false opinion, than not to struggle at all, and take the world as a pasture for thoughtless, soulless animals. I cherish for you the hope that you will never descend to base objects, and therefore, courage, young man! courage! God be with you even against your will!"

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" echoed the thundering farewell-shout, from a hundred and fifty youthful hearts on the banks of the Aura; and waving his hat, Paul Bertelsköld saw the old metropolis of Finland disappear behind the gray mountains.

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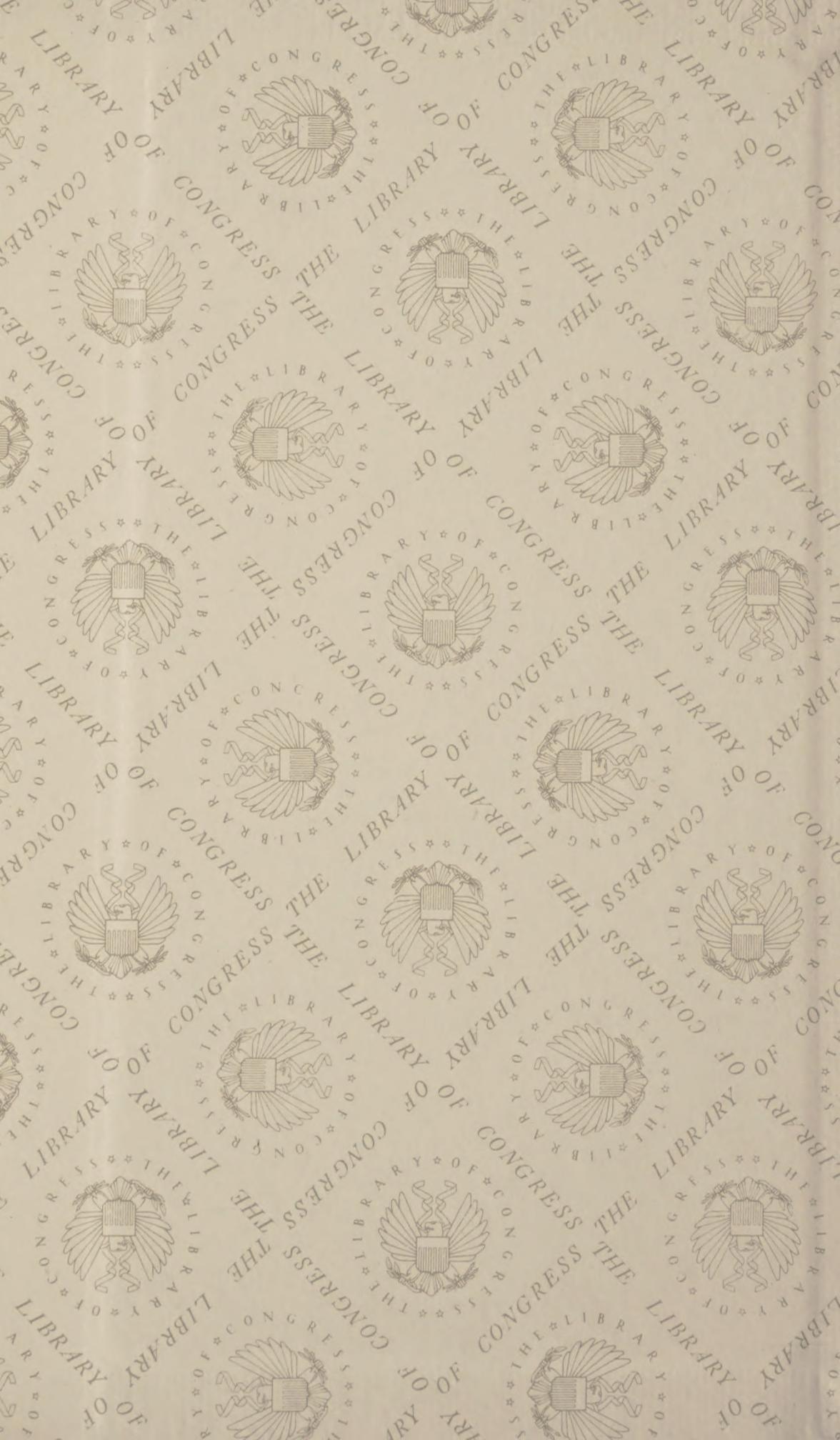
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